

Dominican Retreat Companion

By the
Very Reverend C. M. Thuermer, P. C.
of the Order of Preachers.

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Illustrated by the
Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual
Rosary,
Catonsville, Md.

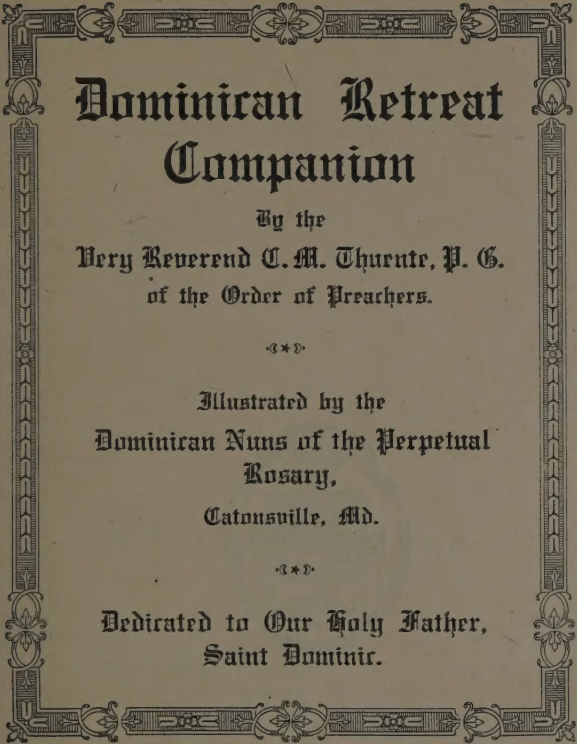
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Dedicated to Our Holy Father,
Saint Dominic.

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ST. DOMINIC'S VISION OF THE ROSARY.



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Dedicated to Our Holy Father,
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NIHIL OBSTAT:

IGNATIUS SMITH, O. P., S. T. Lr.

Censor Deputatus.

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IMPRIMI POTEST:

RAYMUNDUS MEAGHER, O. P., S. T. Lr.

Provincialis.

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ MICHAEL J. CURLEY,

Archiepiscopus Baltimorensis.

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PREFACE

The Dominican Order takes laudable pride in the high ideals which were the incentive for the foundation of a religious order which was to be a defender of the faith and the Holy See and a mother of saints and scholars. These exceptional ideals surrounded Dominic with a galaxy of remarkable men, individual in their characteristics, not formed in a single mold, not fashioned by a straight jacket routine of regulations, but all conforming to the marvelous ideals of the Master Founder. The production of a Thomas Aquinas, a Catherine of Siena, a Henry Suso, a John Tauler, not to speak of hundreds of others, all so different in their types yet high in the esteem of the church, is sufficient vindication of the ideals of Dominic and Dominican methods of the conformation of souls to Christ.

Father Thuente in his previous retreats, the thoughts of which in one case emanated from the passion of Christ and in another encircles the prisoner of love in the tabernacle, gave us interesting and efficacious material for our meditations. But in the present series of retreat conferences, the peculiarly Dominican ideals, particularly as they are exemplified in the lives of the brethren, are made manifest and developed. It is our sincerest hope and wish that this present booklet is but a beginning of a series of similar articles which will make known to the world the ideals of "God's hallowed wrestler".

RAYMOND MEAGHER, O. P.,

Provincial.

Feast of St. Catherine of Siena,

April 30th, 1928.

(First Conference)

ST. DOMINIC A MASTER OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Children of St. Dominic make retreats to become more truly Dominican; to be filled more fully with his blessed spirit.

When St. Dominic's children make a retreat, they live for a few days as St. Dominic lived all the days of his life. We read that he was a silent man, a man who spoke with God, a man who spoke about God, a man who spoke rarely about other things. Thus, these days, we keep silence to speak with God, to listen to God, and to His representative speaking to us.

Dominicans making a retreat, find a great and holy retreat master in St. Dominic. We call him Father, "Magne Pater," "great Father," because he gave us an abundance of spiritual food. Every evening we sing the beautiful canticle, "O Lumen Ecclesiae," "O Light of the Church." He, the light of the whole church, must enlighten us, his children, these days. We call him the "Doctor Veritatis," the "Teacher of truth." We shall beg him to teach us the great eternal truths. We call him the "Praedicator Gratiae." May he teach us the means of grace and give to us freely "the water of wisdom," "aquam sapientiae."

St. Dominic, our spiritual, invisible retreat master, was one of the greatest of the masters of the spiritual life. He, although very poor and humble, drew to himself hundreds of youthful souls. Great were the miracles he performed, curing the sick and restoring to life the dead; but his great power is seen most clearly in the way he transformed and reformed souls. Young men like Jordan,

Reginald, Bertrand and Hyacinth; young women like Cecilia and Diana, entered his school of perfection, and in a short time he impressed his own character upon their souls, communicated to them his spirit, and made them "Dominicans." He was a perfect novice master. St. Dominic not only drew the privileged souls out of the world to himself, he not only filled them with the spirit of God, but he, in a marvelous way, also lifted them up to God, purified them, sanctified them and made them saints. A Hyacinth, a Peter, a Raymond, canonized saints; a Jordan, a Reginald, a Mannes, a Bertrand, a Guala, a Ceslaus, a Diana, a Cecilia, an Amata, our beatified saints, are the witnesses of his spiritual power. Well does Bl. Jordan, his disciple, address him in his prayer: "O blessed soul of St. Dominic, surrounded by the blessed, attracted by your example, stirred up by your admonitions, enlightened by your sweet doctrine, elevated by your preaching. Holy Father St. Dominic, perfect model of a saintly priest, of a faithful confessor, of an illustrious preacher." This spiritual master of many great saints, we choose you for our retreat master.

St. Dominic gave us no book on the spiritual life as St. Francis and other founders of religious families did, nor spiritual exercises like St. Ignatius. That is true, and that we regret. As a student, he gave away and sold most of his manuscripts to help the poor, and in later life he wrote no books. St. Dominic, like the "Dominus," "The Lord," was no writer; he was a preacher. His great books are his personality, his life, his example, his rule and the reflection of his life and preaching in the souls and writings of his disciples. He wrote his lessons not on paper but on the loving hearts of his faithful followers. In the history of St. Dominic, and in the history of the early Dominican saints, we shall seek and, with God's grace, find our inspirations and instructions for the Dominican retreat.

THE OFFICE OF THE FEAST OF ST. DOMINIC

During the seven hundred years that passed since his death, many books and other treatises have been written on the inner and on the public life of St. Dominic. We shall give preference to the "Office of St. Dominic" as we find in it our breviary and missal, the two great books of prayer of the Church. That office is a master-piece. It was composed, we are told, shortly after the canonization of the saint, and when many of his companions were still living, when the memory of his words and works filled every heart in every Dominican convent where the Order was developing into its golden period. It was composed by the leading scholars of the various provinces of the "Order of Truth." We must therefore presume that all this Office tells us about St. Dominic, in its lessons and hymns, in its antiphons and responses, is absolutely true, and moreover, that nothing which is of importance concerning his inner and public life is omitted. The Office gives us the best, the most characteristic picture of the soul of St. Dominic.

The tomb of St. Dominic, in the church of St. Dominic in the city of Bologna, is well known and greatly admired. There artistic hands chiseled, in fine Italian marble, some of the principal events of the life of our Holy Father. The precious classic tomb is sacred; it contains the holy relics. It serves as an altar upon which the Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated. It is a beautiful, an immortal monument of the immortal man of God. The Office has some advantages over the marvelous tomb as a key to St. Dominic's life. It expresses probably more clearly and more fully the inner life of the saint. It is likewise sacred. It is a prayer recited, chanted and sung in the sanctuary. It is multiplied without number, and reaches easily the hands and hearts of all his spiritual children. Parts of this

Office we intend to study, in a prayerful way, during the days of the retreat. It is our book of Dominican spiritual exercises.

"THE DEATH OF ST. DOMINIC"

For our opening meditation, we take the death of our saint. Death is always a great retreat master. Death always commands silence and serious reflections on the vanity of the world, and on the immortality of the soul. The death of a saint is always the most beautiful page in the history of his life. The death of Jesus is the greatest event in the history of creation. The death of St. Dominic is remarkably instructive and his testament is a most precious inheritance. The emblematic torch, always bright, was never so bright as in the hour of death. The eloquent preacher was never so eloquent and effective, as in his last words.

The description of the death of St. Dominic, we find in the lessons of the octave of the feast. Subsequent historians add a few details of lesser importance.

When the second general chapter of the Order had been celebrated, during Pentecost week in the year 1221, when the Order was fully and firmly established in many countries, growing fast and working hard for the salvation of souls, St. Dominic, the Master General, visited northern Italy, and, returning in July, felt keenly the intense, oppressive heat of the summer. As he was praying with great fervor one evening, an angel appeared to him and said: "Come beloved! enter the home of true joy." He was glad. Almost too weak to stand, he went according to his custom to the church and spent the night in prayer and assisted at the recitation of matins. The next day, having a burning fever, and suffering from a severe headache, he called the novices and exhorted them with words full of life and fervor, to love God, and to love

monastic observance. His patience was great, and his face reflected a joyful and cheerful soul. The Prior, Father Ventura and the senior members of the convent, desiring to prolong his life, and believing that the heat, more oppressive in the city, might shorten it, took their beloved Father and Master to St. Mary's Church on a hill. It was the 5th or 6th of August. On the 6th of August, in the morning, Dominic called every father of the community, and spoke his parting words. They were words of fire; it was a speech of flame. The dying Father burned into the hearts of his sons, the one object of his life, "save souls; practice poverty, charity, humility, to save souls." Then lying on a floor strewn with ashes, he made a general confession, and confessed his sins to Father Ventura. The fathers seeing the end approaching, carried him back to the convent, that he, according to his wish, might die there and be buried under their feet. Having reached the convent, they took him to the room of Father Ventura, for Dominic had no room of his own. There he rested for an hour, and then asked his brethren to begin the prayers for the dying. All wept. The compassionate Father consoled them, promising to help them when with God, more than he could help them on earth. The Litany of the Saints was recited. Dominic responded. During the prayers that followed, he lifted his hands and died peacefully. It was Friday, at noon, the 6th of August, the feast of the Transfiguration.

These were great spiritual exercises. That was the greatest and best Dominican retreat. Slowly we must live through these various scenes, that our souls may be purified, that our souls may be enlightened, that our souls may be transfigured.

Let us keep this picture of the dying Father in our minds, review the principal details. Kneel down and say the "O Spem Miram."

(Second Conference)

"OMNIA AD SALUTEM ANIMARUM"

St. Dominic, the Divine Office tells us, was an apostolic man, "*vir factus evangelicus*," a man who studied the Gospel, a man who lived the Gospel, a man who preached the Gospel. He was a second Eliaś, whose words were like fire, and whose speech was a flame. He was a second John the Baptist, "a burning and shining lamp." St. Dominic had a voice, and St. Dominic was a voice, crying not only in the wilderness, but among the people in all countries, "save your soul"—"save souls"—"all to save souls." In these words St. Thomas sums up the life-work of St. Dominic and the specific end of his Order.

To save souls, the youthful St. Dominic became a priest; to save souls the young priest became a canon of St. Augustine; to save souls St. Dominic, being the superior of the canons, gave up his possessions, his titles, his country, to save souls he founded the convent school of Prouille; to save souls he founded the "Order of Friars Preachers;" to save souls he was a flaming torch from the cradle to the grave; to save souls, often during his blessed life, and especially when dying, he tried to burn into the hearts of his followers the motto, "*omnia ad salutem animarum*."

To understand that noble, spiritual missionary and Saint; to be animated and filled with his missionary spirit; to be such flaming torches, torches that burn, and torches that shine, we must often meditate on the three words; "soul," "salvation," "all."

"THE SOUL"

"*Salutis animarum sitientissimus*." We read in the breviary that St. Dominic thirsted with a great thirst for the salvation of souls. What caused that great thirst in

his soul? His own soul was so great and so pure; he loved it in God; he understood its origin. It is the breath of God coming from his loving heart. He understood its beauty. It is the image of God, a little less than the angels, crowned with honor and glory. He understood its supernatural perfection when clothed in a wedding garment that makes it a child, a friend, a spouse of God. He understood its great value; it has a spiritual and immortal nature. He meditated much on the crucified Jesus, saying "I thirst." With the Lord, St. Dominic looked upon his soul, and upon the souls of others, in the light of faith, in the light of Christ, and his soul felt the very thirst of Jesus.

St. Dominic understood the great value of a soul, because he fervently and frequently considered the great price Jesus paid for it. We have been bought at a great price, not with gold and silver, but with the Blood of Jesus.

In the "Lives of the Brethren," a book written soon after the death of St. Dominic, we read the following about Blessed Jordan, the zealous disciple of St. Dominic. "In his zeal for reclaiming an apostate, he first consulted his brethren, but there was one who would not give his consent." Then the holy Father answered, "What if this man has been guilty of many crimes, he will in all probability commit as many more, except he be reclaimed." Still the brother would not yield, upon which the Master said impressively: "Ah, brother, if you had shed but one drop of your blood for this poor man, as Christ has given all His Blood, you would look on the affair very differently." St. Dominic kneeling before the crucifix so long and so often, considered how Jesus gave all His Blood, for his soul, and for the souls of his brethren. He looked on the affair differently. He loved the soul in Jesus Christ, and with Jesus never looked down upon, but

always looked up to every soul, seeing in it the image of God, the image of Jesus Christ, the mark of baptism and regeneration.

“SALVATION”

“Ardebat quasi facula, pro zelo pereuntium.” St. Dominic burned like a torch to save perishing souls. God is great! The great God made the soul, His masterpiece, great. It must live as long as He lives. His love is great. If the soul loves God, and dies in that love, it will live an endless life in the house of the Father. If that soul will not love God it will be cursed, and commanded to depart into everlasting fire. These are eternal truths. Those who remember these truths, death, judgment, heaven and hell, do not sin. Those who remember these truths live to save their souls in the fear of the Lord. St. Dominic meditated much on these doctrines, terrible and sublime, and when dying he was very happy, because he felt that he had saved his soul. The more he had made these truths his own, the more he burned with the desire to save souls. Jesus stood in the midst of men who were walking on the broad way of destruction, and said, “I come to save and not to judge.” “I will not the death of a sinner; I will that he live.” St. Dominic had the spirit of the Saviour, Jesus, and like Him, he went about to save souls from hell-fire, to lead souls to paradise. Dominic was like *the* “Dominus”; Dominic was Christ-like, apostolic.

Since so many, especially in the days of youth, forget the “one thing necessary,” we quote here a conversation which took place in the time of St. Dominic, between a venerable pastor and a noble youth, Humbert of the Romans, who became later, the fifth Master General of the Order. Humbert was a student in Paris. One day when he was assisting privately at the “Office of the Dead,” the

pastor came up to him, and said, "Friend, may I ask whether you are one of my flock?" "I believe I am," said the youth, mentioning where he lodged. "Since then you belong to me," continued the pastor, "I shall open my mind to you." "Do you remember what promises you made to God in baptism?" "No, what promises did I make?" asked the student. "You promised to renounce satan and all his works and pomps." "But why do you put this question to me now?" asked the student. "Because there are many students, who for long years put up with great hardships here in Paris, in pursuing their studies, and yet the end of all their study is only one of satan's pomps. In their hearts they are saying to themselves: 'When I shall have studied in Paris and become a master in your faculty, I will return home famous, and be reputed a great theologian, benefices will be presented to me, and no doubt I will rise to be a dignitary of the church.' What is all this, may I ask you, but a pomp of satan? Beware, friend, of harboring any such motives in your studies." When the pastor had ended his remarks, the student heard the solemn response of the Office, "woe unto me, O Lord, for I have sinned exceedingly in my life. What will become of me, unhappy man that I am? Whither shall I flee for refuge, save only unto Thee, my God." This student, Humbert, became a Dominican to keep his baptismal promises, to renounce the pomp of satan, to save his soul, and to help the Lord to save souls. There are many such students who dream of vain pomp. St. Dominic burned like a torch to save such souls.

"ALL"

"All." Jesus loving souls gave His time; gave His doctrine, gave His helping hand, gave His tears, gave His Blood, gave His Life. Love gives. The greatest love gives all. Jesus gave His life, and a greater love no man can

have. He bought us at a great price, not with silver and gold, but with the Blood of His Heart.

St. Dominic followed the "Dominus" also in this respect, and became truly a "Dominican." In the Divine Office, we read, "salutis animarum sitientissimus, martyrii quoque cupidissimus." Christ-like, he thirsted for souls, and Christ-like he longed and prayed to give his blood as a partial atonement for the sins of the heretics, and as a striking proof of his love for souls.

St. Dominic was not permitted to die the death of a martyr. He no doubt, shortened his life, working and weeping and praying and fasting, and bleeding for them. "Pugnat verbo." "The white athlete of God fought for souls, preaching and working miracles, sending his preaching Friars into all parts of the world, adding pleading tears to his fervent prayers." Thus we sing in the matins of his feast.

St. Dominic was a "Magnus Pater;" a great Father, a holy Dominic, and he made the Dominican vocation, "omnia ad salutem animarum" most beautiful. May he help us to save our immortal souls, that while working for others we may not become castaways. He who saves his own soul, will always directly or indirectly help to save the souls of others. May he help us, that we, having his name, having his habit, having his rule, may have his spirit, his zeal, and pray and sacrifice and teach and preach to save souls, as many as possible, by all means possible.



(Third Conference)

“FRATERNAL CORRECTION”

In the first part of a retreat, as in the first part of the spiritual life, we must in the light of the Holy Ghost, look inward and backward to see our mistakes, our faults and our sins. We must purify the soul. That must be done well. All ornamentations will not beautify that inner palace, if the palace is not clean. The Baptist speaking about the work of the “Lamb of God” that takes away the sins of the world, says, “Whose fan is in His hands, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” May St. Dominic help us to cleanse thoroughly our souls. “O Thou who didst shine illustrious by so many miracles, wrought on the bodies of the sick, bring us the help of Christ, to heal our sick souls.” Thus we pray in the sweet “O Spem Miram.”

Here we may ask what did St. Dominic do to heal the sick souls of his youthful followers and disciples? How did the Master drive out of their hearts the spirit of worldliness, vanity and self-love, and set them on fire with his love of God and love for souls?

St. Dominic corrected the faults of his brethren. Fraternal correction is fundamental in the rule of St. Augustine, which St. Dominic observed as a canon, and which St. Dominic adopted for his Order. We read, “if you should detect this wantonness of the eye, in any member of your brotherhood, forthwith admonish him, that the evil thus begun, may not grow worse, but may be corrected by your charity. But, if after this warning, the same fault is perceived in him, on that or another day, the fact must be disclosed as a wound that needs care. You cannot be free from blame, if by your silence, your brethren are allowed to perish, when by pointing out their faults you might have corrected them.”

St. Thomas of Aquin, the light and glory of the Dominican Order, was born a few years after St. Dominic died. He, in his sermon, compares St. Dominic to the sun in the sky that enlightens all things with its rays, and makes all living things grow and ripen and bear fruit. He tells also in that sermon, that St. Dominic corrected every little fault severely, that he acted according to the good advice of his divine Master and pruned the fruit-tree, that it may bear more fruit. Brother Rudolph, who knew St. Dominic intimately, says of him, "when he saw a brother doing wrong he pretended not to see it for the moment, later he would take him aside, and remark, 'brother, you did wrong, confess it.' " With words of kindness he would induce the brothers to confess their faults, and although he punished all fault with severity, he never dismissed a brother without having made him feel better and consoled. We have only one letter of all the writings of our Holy Father. It was written to his beloved daughters in Madrid. That one letter is very precious, for it reflects the character of the Saint. In it we read: "and such is our will that henceforth silence be kept in the places prescribed by the Order, to wit, in the choir, refectory, dormitory, and that in all other respects, you live according to your constitutions. None shall pass the threshold of your Monastery, nor shall any secular enter among you. On no account omit the practices of disciplines and watchings; be obedient to your prioress; do not waste your time in idle conversations." The very reading of this letter, makes us feel that St. Dominic was a Master, a General, a Superior who expressed his will in a few plain direct words, and who aimed at results.

Here we may well pause and ask ourselves whether we have kept the commands given in this letter, whether we have kept silence, whether we have wasted much time in idle talk, whether we have passed the threshold of the convent, going out without reason, or permitting secular

persons to enter without cause, whether we have omitted the practices of disciplines and watchings, whether we have been obedient to our superior. Let us ask St. Dominic to take us aside, to tell us what wrong we have done. Let us ask ourselves whether we have had the fearless charity to correct the want of modesty or other faults in our companions, whether we received such corrections in an humble spirit, and confessed and corrected our faults.

"ST. DOMINIC KNEW HOW TO CORRECT FAULTS"

Every convent is a school of perfection, and in that school of perfection, as in every school, correction of faults and mistakes is a very important feature. St. Dominic was a master of this delicate and difficult task. Analyzing the testimony of Brother Rudolph, quoted above, who, no doubt, had often received corrections, and profited by them, we notice five things: first, he pretended not to see the fault; secondly, he would take the erring brother aside; thirdly, he knew how to make the brother confess his fault; fourthly, he would punish him severely; and finally he would console the brother when corrected and punished.

These five points merit the close study of all religious, of superiors who may be obliged to correct and of subjects who must learn how to profit by corrections received.

St. Dominic waited. Faults are often committed because of great excitement, undue haste and ill temper. The delinquent is not fully himself. He is truly unreasonable. He needs time to become calm and reasonable. Moreover, he who corrects needs time to reflect, to find the best time, place, and words for correcting.

St. Dominic would take the culpable brother aside, admonish him privately. By correcting privately, he acted according to the Rule of St. Augustine founded on the advice of Christ. Lesser faults against the constitu-

tions, or graver faults committed publicly, giving public scandal, may and should be corrected publicly, in the meeting of the "Chapter of Faults." Such "Chapter Rooms" form an essential part of the convent. Such "Chapters of Faults" were held daily in the days of St. Dominic. They were hated by the devil, but loved by the saints. They are holy instruments for maintaining discipline and order. Pope Paul the Fifth even granted an indulgence to religious who accuse themselves in Chapter, of their faults, sins and imperfections.

But grave faults against the constitutions or against the commandments of God, if committed in secrecy, should be corrected privately. The good name of a consecrated person is doubly sacred, and must be respected and protected. The unnecessary manifestation of grave faults gives scandal and lowers the standard of the community.

St. Dominic knew how to touch the very conscience of the offending brother to make him see his faults, and much more, to make him repent and acknowledge it himself. That is the triumph of a saint. That is the fruit of correction. That is the result of correcting with humility and charity; of loving the brother while hating his fault.

St. Dominic punished with severity. Of the severity of his punishments, we have one historic example. We know how he disciplined a heretic whom he converted. To understand it we must remember that St. Dominic lived in the days of the crusades, in the days of knight-hood and chivalry. He was dealing with a heretic returning penitent to the church, with a man who had committed one of the greatest sins and who had given scandal. Severe punishment was inflicted to atone for the sins and the scandal and to cure the weakness of the sinner.

Along with bodily punishments, the Saint knew how to impart the consolations of religion. He never discouraged a soul. He always helped the soul to rise and carry its cross onward and upward.

One of his followers, William of Montefarrato, tells us how St. Dominic won his heart, and no doubt, the hearts of many other young men. Speaking of the time when he was a student in Rome, William says, "at that time Brother Dominic was at the Roman Curia and often visited the bishop of Ostia. There I learned to know him. I liked his conversations. I learned to love him. We often spoke of the salvation of our souls, and the souls of our fellow-men. It seemed to me that I never met a more saintly man, although I had met many who were saintly. We agreed to go together, after two years, to the pagans in Prussia, and in the countries of the north." That pictures well the master among his novices. "Let us save our souls. Let us save the souls of as many as possible, by all means possible. Finish your studies, and we shall go not to one pagan country, but to many countries of pagans, and teach all the great Creed of the Apostles." With such words, he inspired and encouraged young men.

Thus St. Dominic purified and sanctified souls, by correcting their faults in his masterly way. He made them humble, and truthful, and simple, and by lifting up their eyes to see the countries, "white to harvest," he enthused them.

"O wonderful hope which thou gavest to those who wept for thee, at the hour of thy death, promising after thy departure to be helpful to thy brethren."

"Fulfill, O Father, what thou hast said, and help us by thy prayers."



(Fourth Conference)

"ST. DOMINIC WEPT MUCH"

Dominican or "Dominicus" means to belong to the Lord, or to be like unto the Lord. Thus the Sunday is called in the Latin language, the language of the church, "dies Dominica," the Lord's Day. The "Our Father" is called "Oratio Dominica," the Lord's Prayer. When we call our Holy Father "Dominic" or "Dominicus," we signify that he was a providential Friar Preacher who was the Lord's "Hallowed Wrestler."

To preach Christ, to give testimony of Christ, to be a witness of Christ, the life of the preacher must be Christ-like. He must not only have a voice crying, "do penance," but his whole life must be a voice, crying, "do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand." He must, like the great Apostle St. Paul, manifest the life of Christ in the very mortified appearance of his body. He must teach the life of Christ by living that life, by giving that example. St. Dominic understood this well and therefore he excelled in doing penance and in teaching his mission-band "to do works worthy of penance."

In the short lessons of the Office of his feast, we are told that he spent the greater part of the nights in prayer, that he scourged himself every night with an iron chain until the blood flowed, that he fasted much, and that he never ate meat, that he wept much especially when celebrating Mass.

Let us study this picture of St. Dominic standing in the sanctuary weeping. When we see a strong man weeping, we know that something great touches his soul and moves him profoundly.

In order to get this picture more clearly defined, visualize him as described by Blessed Cecilia, his spiritual daughter. "He was," she writes, "of middle height and

slender figure, of handsome and somewhat ruddy countenance, his hair and beard of auburn, and with lustrous eyes. From out his forehead and between his eye-brows, a radiant light shone forth, which drew everyone to revere and love him. He was always joyous and cheerful, except when moved to compassion at anyone's sorrows." This Dominic, this man of God, naturally joyous and cheerful, we see in the Sanctuary, and his lustrous eyes are filled with tears. He returns to his loving Master in the Tabernacle, after a day's struggle on the mission field, and confesses his failings, and defects, and sins. His sins were never grievous or mortal. Father Ventura, who heard his general confession, told the Church after his death, that he never committed a grievous sin, that he never lost his baptismal innocence. Such holy souls stand in the light of God. In that light they see clearly every venial fault and imperfection, and they see moreover, the effects of sins. They see how venial sins offend the loving God, tarnish His image in the soul, soil the wedding garment, and to a great extent, weaken its power and influence for doing good, for saving souls.

Therefore examining his conscience in the evening, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, he confessed his daily faults with tears of repentance. They are the tears of a Mary Magdalene, the tears of a Peter who wept bitterly. Blessed tears that wash clean the sin-stained soul. Weeping thus like a repenting Peter, St. Dominic bared his shoulders, took an iron chain and scourged himself until he was bleeding. What a picture! St. Dominic weeping and bleeding. What a sermon of repentance and penance! We pray with the church: "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we who are weighed down by the burden of our sins, may be relieved by the intercession of the Blessed Dominic, Thy confessor and our Father."

“TEARS OF COMPASSION”

There is a second reason why St. Dominic stood every evening weeping and bleeding, before his Master in the Tabernacle. He had a very tender heart. He was easily moved to compassion, seeing the sins and sorrows of others. We know that when he was a student, he sold his precious books to help the poor. We know that when he was a young man he was willing to sell himself, in order to redeem a young prisoner and console the mother. In the “Lives of the Brethren,” we read, “so wonderfully tender-hearted was he, touching the sins and miseries of man, that when he came near any city or town, which he could look down upon from above, he would burst into tears at the thought of the miseries of mankind, of the sins committed therein, and of the number who were going down to hell.”

Going about during the day, St. Dominic, the great missionary, saw much misery, even as Christ did during His public life. Christ wept, says St. John, when He saw the tears of Mary and Martha, mourning the death of Lazarus. Christ wept when He saw the sins of Jerusalem and tried to bring the inhabitants thereof to repentance, to take away their sins. Dominic studied and imitated the Lord. He wept tears of compassion, and scourged himself, as Christ was scourged for the sins of the world.

Men who have such hearts are always eloquent, powerful in word and deed. Such models and masters we must imitate.

Blessed Bertrand was often a companion of St. Dominic, when he went about among the people. He was a faithful son, tried to imitate his Spiritual Father, and like him wept much. We read that St. Dominic “having observed Brother Bertrand grieve bitterly at the remembrance of his sins, he forbade him to weep so much for his own transgressions, but would have him weep over the

unrepented sins of others." Like Blessed Bertrand we must learn from St. Dominic to weep for our sins and the sins of others.

The fact that St. Dominic was so tender-hearted, and so tenderly compassionate with sinners in sorrow, gives us great confidence. We go to him and we pray, "St. Dominic, our own sweet Father, have compassion on the afflicted, show thy tender love to us poor sinners, exiles and pilgrims to Heaven; despise not our humble petitions, but deliver us from all dangers, and by thy holy intercession help us to reach the kingdom of security and peace."

"TEARS WHEN CELEBRATING MASS"

St. Dominic prayed much and touchingly, says the breviary, especially when celebrating Mass. Here we have a new and most beautiful picture of our saint. We see him a priest at the altar.

St. Dominic was great as a preacher saving souls, and as an organizer of preachers to save souls, but his true greatness we find in his priestly character.

A priest is "another Christ" according to the doctrine of the Fathers of the Church. He has the dignity, the power, the mission of Christ. He rises to his full dignity, and uses his greatest power, and executes his primary mission, when offering up the Sacrifice of the Mass. Then and there St. Dominic was indeed "Dominican," like Christ, Christ's son. Why did St. Dominic weep when celebrating Mass? Mass is the commemoration of the Passion and Death and triumph of our Lord. When the saint commemorated that Passion, when he played the part of Christ Crucified, he entered fully and profoundly into the sublime mysteries of Faith, having the Crucifix before his eyes and the Chalice with the Blood, that was shed for the remission of sins, in his hands, his tender

loving heart felt it all and he wept. Tears are the words of the heart. They were the blessed tears of divine compassion. Those were the tears of John, the beloved disciple, and the blessed Mother on Good Friday standing under the Cross.

Again we ask why did St. Dominic weep when celebrating Mass. In Mass he offered up the Blood of the Lamb for the remission of sins, for the salvation of his beloved penitents. In the evening and during the night, he stood in the sanctuary weeping and bleeding for his sins and for the sins of his penitents, and those tears and drops of blood were a holy preparation for the Mass. In Mass he offered them up with the Blood Divine, pleading for mercy. St. Dominic was a good priest, and the good priest said Mass well, and that Mass said well gave him great power to save souls.

Let us imitate this Master, and go to our Lord every evening and confess to him our work of the day, to thank him for the blessings enjoyed, to obtain his forgiveness for the sins committed. Since we cannot weep and bleed and sacrifice as the Saint did, let us be humble and ask him to help us, and plead for us and with us.

"Fulfill, O Father, what thou hast said, and help us by thy prayers."



(Fifth Conference)

“THE DEATH OF ST. DOMINIC”

St. Dominic made his Friars truly great and powerful teachers and preachers, teaching them first and above all to live the life of Christ. We must do penance to make sinners do works worthy of penance; we must pray to teach the world to pray; we must learn to die, to teach the world how to die; we must save our souls to help our neighbor to save his soul. The fire that made the torch of St. Dominic flaming, burning and shining was in his heart. It came from within; it came from God. This fundamental truth made St. Dominic a reformer of the clergy and of his people. It is well illustrated in the following incident taken from the “Lives of the Brethren:” “A general debate with the heretics being agreed upon, the Bishop of the place wanted to attend in state with the pompous retinue, but St. Dominic addressing him, said, ‘it is not in this fashion that we ought to meet them, but we ought rather strive to win them over by our humility and virtuous example, than by mere show and display, or by contentious words, and since the present meeting is not without its fears, let us arm ourselves with humility and go there barefooted.’” In these words we see the soul of St. Dominic, and the secret of the success of his Friars Preachers.

To have the humble and contrite heart which God never despises, we in spirit, kneel down with the weeping brethren, and witness his death. Death is a great teacher, and brings home to us fundamental truths. We shall consider three thoughts taken from the Bible—Death is a thief.—Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints. The picture of the dying St. Dominic illustrates them well.

"DEATH IS A THIEF"

These are the words of Jesus Christ. What did death take from St. Dominic? Not money or earthly treasure. He had given them to his Master before the thief entered his room. Death took his blessed body and ended his labors. It closed his lustrous eyes; it sealed his lips and silenced his noble musical voice. It took the Master from his disciples, the father from his family. Indeed the brethren had reason to weep. Their love was great. The vanity, the emptiness of all these things! We cannot keep them long. Our days are numbered and the number is small. We must learn to use our gifts and faculties while we have them. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, whilst it is day, the night cometh when no man can work."

St. Dominic never stood idle. St. Dominic worked in the vineyard to the very last day. St. Dominic died working, and did his greatest work when dying. That is Dominican. Idleness is a great sin, and idleness is the root of very great evils. The idleness of consecrated men who hold the gospel of peace, the chalice of salvation, and the keys of heaven in their hands, is a crime that has caused the loss of many souls, the ruin of many cities and nations.

**"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE
LORD"**

There is in man a strong, natural, inborn desire to live. Man is willing to toil and to suffer, and to sacrifice all temporal goods to live, and to prolong his natural life. Man therefore fears death, and looks upon death as an enemy and as a punishment. It was the God of love who gave life. It was God in just and holy anger who said, "thou shalt die the death."

The terrors of the death of a sinful man are often eloquently described to us. They cannot be exaggerated. Christ the Master of life and death, tells us that in the harvest time He will tell His Angels to gather the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn. Again the Lord tells us, that the sinners are like the foolish virgins, who have no oil in their lamps, and in death hear the word, "I know you not." Terrible was the death of Judas the traitor.

Jesus who conquered death, dying on the Cross, and who restored life, rising from the dead, provided for those who die in His Church, great consolations. These consolations of the prudent virgins are too seldom remembered and too little appreciated. We see them in the dying St. Dominic. He is joyous, cheerful, and peaceful, although his pains are great, and his friends are weeping. What made his soul so cheerful? Having constantly cooperated with the grace of God, he felt that the work the Master had given him to do was finished. The Order of Preachers was established. He reviewed his eventful life, examined his conscience and confessed his sins, before meeting the just all-seeing Judge. Such a holy confession is a great consolation, the consolation of a Mary Magdalene, who heard Jesus say, "go in peace."

St. Dominic dying received Holy Viaticum, Jesus, as a companion on the long journey into eternity. His parting meant "I must leave you now never to return." The tears of his beloved sons meant, "we must let you go alone, we cannot go with you." Then Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament enters and whispers, "I shall not leave you; I go with you to open the gates of the house of my Father." He receives Extreme Unction, and the anointing of the body blots out the last stains of sin, and strengthens the soul. The brethren were praying, and he prayed with them, and praying and singing, he left this vale of tears, and began the joys of the eternal wedding feast. Indeed blessed are the dead who die in the

Lord. The sting is taken out of death, and death is swallowed up in victory. Death opens the door of immortality.

These blessings of the dying who die in the Lord, are so great, that no Catholic dying, no matter how ignorant and weak, says, "I am sorry I am a Catholic." He feels if only I had been a good Catholic. No religious, when dying, says, "I am sorry that I am in a convent." He feels if only I had been a good religious. Every Dominican dying feels it is good to be a Dominican.

The blessed death of the holy Father, has given great inspirations to the members of his family. In the "Lives of the Brethren" we find many examples of such a happy, Catholic, religious, Dominican death. St. Peter, the leader of the great legion of Dominican martyrs, said to a companion, "listen Brother to the earnest prayer of my heart, and one that moves my spirit most. When I hold the uplifted Body of Christ in my hands, or when I gaze upon it elevated in the hands of the priest, at the altar, I earnestly pray Him to grant me that I may never die otherwise than as a martyr for the faith." Brother Conrad for whose vocation, St. Dominic spent a whole night in prayer, spoke these words of calm confidence: "Know this my Brethren, that I die confidently and gladly, as one of God's faithful friends. I die confidently for I know that I am going to join Him. I die joyfully since I am about to pass from this place of exile to my true home, and from sorrow to everlasting joys." "Death," said Brother Everard, "should have no terror for him, who sees the frail casket break asunder in the hope that the pearl within, that is the soul, may find in heaven an imperishable home not made by mortal hands." Well known are the letters of Blessed Jordan, describing the saintly death of his bosom friend, the venerable Henry of Cologne. "I wept," he confesses, "as I never wept over the death of anyone. I wept before he died, and wept

when he was dying. I wept after his death. They were tears of consolation, the tears of one who prays, of one who believes in the living God." Blessed Sadoc and his Companions died the death of martyrs, singing cheerfully the "Salve Regina," and thus made the singing of "O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary, show us Jesus after this exile," the sweet ceremony whenever a member of the Dominican Order falls asleep in the Lord.

"PRECIOSA"

We must add a few words to explain that the death of a saint is precious in the sight of the Lord, and precious for those mourning in this vale of tears. We all know how precious the death of Jesus was. It shook all Creation and opened the gates of heaven and redeemed mankind. We all know that the death of the early martyrs, was the seed of Christianity. The death of St. Dominic seemed to be for the little flock a crushing blow, but it proved to be a life-giving event. Jesus died promising to send the Paraclete. He kept His promises and the "Spiritus Sanctus vivificans" came, and the Church lived and grew. St. Dominic died giving the wonderful hope to help his weeping brethren after his death, and immediately after his death, his help was so miraculously great that Pope Gregory Fourth declared him to be a saint worthy to be placed on the altar.

We reflect on these truths, and we resolve to live like St. Dominic, to die like St. Dominic, to confess our sins like the dying St. Dominic, to remember daily "our hour" as Jesus often spoke of "His Hour," that we may die well, and teach people to die well and help people to die well.

"O Light of the Church, O Preacher of grace, unite us to the Blessed." "Obtain for us pardon for our sins and rest for our souls and the joys of Heaven."

(Sixth Conference)

“LOVE OF GOD”

In the second part of the Retreat we seek and try to obtain more light. Our following of Jesus—our religious observance—must be, in as far as we can make it, reasonable. Jesus must open our eyes, give us in a greater measure the light of Faith, that we may follow Him, who is the Light, in His Light.

St. Dominic was naturally and supernaturally an enlightened religious leader. In reciting the Office of his feast, we often repeat the “chapter”; “He shone in his day as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at its full, and as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the Temple of God.” Daily we call him, “The Light of the Church.” The Prayer of the Church in his honor begins, “O God who has enlightened Thy Church by the eminent virtues and preaching of Blessed Dominic.” To that “Light of the Church” who enlightened the Church by the eminent virtues and preaching, we, his children go and humbly seek light.

When dying St. Dominic instructed his novices. The first great subject of his instruction is given to us. “He exhorts them to love God.”

“LOVE OF GOD”

The Love of God, what a subject! We mention it often, we dwell upon it very seldom and very little. It is more profound than the ocean, more sublime than the mountains. It is an ocean infinite and immense.

In the days of St. Dominic the Love of God must have been a favorite subject for sermons and instructions. St. Bernard explained to his silent monks, the Canticle of Canticles, the Canticle of love, and St. Thomas explained

that Canticle of love when resting on his bed of death. Now, that Canticle of love and the Books of Wisdom remain almost closed books, even in religious houses. We read parts of them in the feasts of mystic Saints. Thus, on the feast of St. Catherine de Ricci: "Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell." "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." "If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing." On the feast of St. Rose: "I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valley." "As the lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters." Or again on the feast of St. Teresa: "I called upon God and the spirit of Wisdom came upon me, and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her." "God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wisdom, for she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars. Being compared with the light, she is found before it." Thus these books speak in figurative or poetic words of the love of God and of a soul that loves God.

Since we know not what St. Dominic said speaking about the love of God, we shall take four thoughts on the subject, from the writings of his spiritual sons.

" 'LOVE OF GOD' IS THE FATHER'S GREAT
COMMANDMENT"

"God who so loved the world as to give His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may be saved." He tells us children through that Son and Saviour that all He expects of us His children, is love. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment." That love makes the soul the child of God and the Spouse of Christ. One act of love may save a soul and without

love no soul can be saved. That love of God is the end of all spiritual exercises.

At the Last Supper, when Jesus loving His own unto the end, had given them the Sacrament of Love, He repeated that first and greatest Commandment, saying, "Remain in my Love" and He gave the one great sign of His love, adding, "If you keep my Commandments you will remain in My love." "You are My friends if you do the things I command you."

St. Paul, who expresses his love of God and Jesus Christ so often and so plainly, and whom St. Dominic studied and imitated so closely, declares that all knowledge and all prophecy and all works of corporal charity profiteth nothing without that love of God. And that the love of God is the greatest thing on earth.

St. Augustine, the spiritual father of St. Dominic, begins his rule which St. Dominic made his own, with the words: "Before all things most dear Brothers, we must love God, and after Him, our neighbor." That love of God is the end and aim of all religious observances. St. Dominic understood well that without love of God, he, and his preaching Friars would "become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" and therefore his first and last exhortation was, "love God." The Holy Spirit, the fire of love was in him, and therefore his word, "love God," was a word of fire.

"TO LOVE GOD IS THE GREAT DESIRE OF THE HUMAN HEART"

The God of love gave us the command to love. He formed our hearts, and between His commandment and the desire of a godly heart there is perfect harmony. Every heart not fully corrupted, instinctively longs for and restlessly seeks that love of God. This, men who understood their cravings thoroughly, tell us plainly.

We know how a St. Augustine, a Blessed Henry Suso sought "a certain something" until they found it in loving God. That love of God is the "living water," "the bread of life," that rescues the hungry, thirsting soul walking through the desert.

How a soul getting a taste of that sweet love will leave all to get more and more of it! It made St. Bernard go and live in the wild forests and the monks have followed him willingly up to the present day. It made a St. Teresa enter deeper and deeper into Carmel, and there in the depth of silent, lonely Carmel, we find many a noble woman today seeking that love of God. Human love has its mysteries and tragedies, but all these mysteries and tragedies are small in comparison with those of Divine Love. This is the love that is stronger than death, more precious than all the gems, more beautiful than the brightest light. It made the soul of St. Dominic a burning, flaming torch, with which he burned into the hearts of the novices, the precept: "Love God."

"LOVE OF GOD MAKES THE SOUL GOD-LIKE"

"Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." To resemble more our Father who is in heaven, in beauty, in perfection, in happiness, is the end of every soul,—is the special end of religious life. How can I advance daily and get nearer to the end of my sublime vocation? What power can lift me up since I am inclined by nature to sink down deeper and deeper. Love, love of God is the great power to draw us onward, to lift us upward.

Jesus tells us that our heart is where our treasure is. If, therefore God is the treasure of our heart, love will make our heart live with God. Moreover, the Bible tells us again and again, that our heart becomes like unto the object we love. Love softens the heart, love melts the heart, and then the object it loves shapes it, and reforms

it, and impresses its own image upon it. These are great truths, that require much and serious reflection. In the psalm so often sung: "when Israel went out of the house of Egypt," the inspired writer says, "the idols of the gentiles are silver and gold, the works of the hands of men. They have mouths and speak not, they have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not" and he concludes, "let them that make them become like unto them." Man becomes like unto the idol he loves. If he loves gold and silver, he becomes hardened like gold and silver. If he keeps his mind as so many do today, on the animal life, he becomes beastly. "Man when he was in honor did not understand. He had been compared to senseless beasts and made like unto them." The soul that loves God is gradually lifted up to God and becomes God-like, a little less than the Angels in beauty, perfection, and happiness.

"THE LOVE OF GOD MAKES HAPPINESS"

The fruit of the indwelling Spirit who is love, is joy. Every heart seeks joy but not every heart knows that the joy it seeks is found in loving God. The Angelic Doctor who understood the human heart so well, explains clearly and fully that every act of love gives joy. The greater the goodness and beauty of the object of love, the more intense and prolonged is the act of love, the greater is the joy. God is goodness and beauty, therefore the heart that finds and feels Him is often in a trance and has a foretaste of heavenly joy. The contemplative soul experiences the greatest joys in this world. St. Thomas knew this full well for he had experienced it. The Angelic Doctor lived in the friendship of God and enjoyed that life of love so much, that towards the end of his life his longing to see the face of God unveiled distracted him in his daily work.

St. Dominic loved God, and knew that the love of God makes the soul perfect and beautiful and happy; that

without the love of God, the preaching Friar is sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, therefore living and dying he taught his disciples to love God.



(Seventh Conference)

“OBSERVANCE OF MONASTIC LIFE”

The second great subject on which the dying St. Dominic spoke to his novices, we are told in the Divine Office, was the observance of Monastic life. The love of God, which makes the soul perfect, beautiful and happy, was the great end, and the way to that supreme end is monastic life.

The secondary end of his Order was the salvation of immortal souls by preaching and teaching the word of God. Again to reach that sublime end he wished his novices to be formed in the school of monastic life. He in his missionary activity had experienced the sad results of the preachers who led a worldly life and who had not sufficient knowledge. The venerable John the Teutonic who ruled the Order shortly after the death of the holy Founder, tells us clearly the kind of preachers he wished to form. “Let your discourse be animated and fruitful, refraining from all shallow and affected mannerism, and let your speech be devout and blameless. Let your hearts be filled with an intense and kindling zeal for the salvation of souls. The eyes of many are fixed upon you, as men placed in the world to be resplendent mirrors of holiness, and they look rather for virtuous examples than for oratorical phrases from you.” To make his Friars such preachers of the Gospel, to fire their hearts with an intense and kindling zeal for the salvation of souls, to make them resplendent mirrors of holiness, the Master, St. Dominic, insisted on monastic training. On this subject, our present Master General, speaking in the name of St. Dominic, writes: “For Dominicans, the monastic observance determined by the Constitutions, are a means not merely venerable in origin and suitable to the purpose,

but essential to the very being of the Order. Our Holy Father declared the monastic life an essential part of the Order, and the basis of its Apostolic life." Thus the Most Rev. Father Paredes exhorts us to observe the rules of monastic life even as St. Dominic did seven hundred years ago. It is the school of perfection and the school of solid effective teaching and preaching.

The holy example and the fiery words of St. Dominic bore great fruit. An historian tells us: "words cannot express the spirit of religious fervor which pervaded the Order in the days of our Holy Fathers Dominic and Jordan."

What rules and regulations did St. Dominic insist upon most emphatically when speaking his last word? History does not answer the question. In the Divine Office, we find these words: "he kept silence most strictly and spoke not, excepting with God or about God." In silence, prayer, and holy discourse the holy Father excelled, and with the spirit of these virtues he wished to fill his Dominican monasteries.

"HOLY SILENCE"

Holy silence, masters of religious life tell us, is the mother of recollection, prayer and study. Silence has a voice that whispers to the soul things that are sacred. Without silence, convents and monasteries are little more and no better than boarding houses.

We know how St. Dominic in his letters to the nuns, insisted on silence and admonished them not to waste time in foolish conversation. We know how the early Constitutions say nothing about recreation, but prescribed a profound silence, and a punishment for the transgression of it. We know the beautiful chapter Blessed Henry Suso has on silence, how he sought and found peace in silence, how in thirty years he never broke silence in the

refectory. We know how St. Vincent Ferrer, the most miraculous Dominican missionary, is most severe in his chapter on silence. He takes the advice of the Lord: Let your speech be "yes, yes," and "no, no," almost literally.

What a convent without silence and religious observance was in the eyes of St. Dominic and his companions, we can judge from the following legend in the "Lives of the Brethren:" "Many of our first brethren and others worthy of credit, avow that on one occasion while he was making the rounds of the convent, like a watchful sentinel, he met the devil prowling about like a beast of prey, and bidding him stand still, the holy Father accosted him thus: "Why are you prowling about in this fashion?" "I do so," said the other, "on account of the profit I reap thereby." "And what do you gain in the dormitory, may I ask?" said St. Dominic. "I keep the brethren from enjoying their rest, and then tempt them not to rise for Matins, and when this scheme won't work, I send them foul dreams and illusions." Then taking him to the choir, the holy Father continued: "And what do you gain in this holy place?" "I make them come late and retire soon, and busy them with many distractions." On questioning him about the refectory, he made answer, "Who is there who does not eat more or less than he should?" When brought to the parlor, he fairly chuckled with glee. "Ho, ho, this is my spot, this is the place for laughter, and folly, and idle talk." But when they came to the Chapter Room, the devil tried to make off, and he yelled out, "I loathe this place, for I lose here whatever I may have gained elsewhere, since the brethren are here told of their faults, correct one another, do penance and are absolved." It matters little whether this story of the tempting devil is objectively true or not, it teaches that St. Dominic went about like a watchful sentinel to enforce discipline.

In the days of St. Dominic, the Cistercians, the silent sons of St. Bernard were numerous and very active. St.



ST. DOMINIC AT THE FOOT OF THE CRUCIFIX.

Dominic knew them well, worked with them among the heretics, and according to our historian lived with them for a short time. St. Dominic practiced the silence of the Cistercians and recommended a similar silence to his brethren. Breaking silence pleases the devil and keeping silence pleases God.

“HE SPOKE WITH GOD”

Monastic silence prepares the soul for prayer. The silent St. Dominic spoke with God. Silence helped to lift his heart up to God. In silence he spoke to God, in silence he heard the voice of God, in silence he understood its meaning. Having prayed in silence he was ready to preach the word of God with fiery words. Praying and preaching go together. Jesus spent the whole night in prayer, and then preached on the Mount the greatest of all sermons. The Apostles spent ten days persevering in prayer, and then went forth and spoke about the wonderful works of God. St. Dominic understood that he could not make his Friars teachers and preachers, without making their monasteries, oratories. Therefore he admonished his sons to observe monastic life. Therefore our present Master General insists so much on that “interior life and the practice of asceticism and mysticism.” “This,” he writes, “was the kind of religious education which the first fathers of our Order received from the holy Founder himself, and of its rich fruits we are all well aware.”

The example and exhortations of the silent man of prayer, St. Dominic, inflamed the hearts of his companions. “Seldom if ever was the Church to be found without watchers, and as a result, when anyone was wanted by the porter, he was surer of finding him praying in the choir than elsewhere.” “They looked forward to the hour of Compline, as to a festival, and directly the signal was given they hastened to the choir, from all parts

of the convent, lovingly commending themselves to each other's prayers. Then when the Office was finished, and the parting greeting had been devoutly paid to the Queen of the Universe and special advocate of the Order, they gave themselves up to severe disciplines."

That this observance of monastic life made the members apostolic, we learn from the following testimony. "In the pursuit of their apostolic ministry for which the Order had been intended from the beginning, God poured out upon them such marvelous zeal and fervor, that many could not eat without qualms of conscience unless they had preached that day to many or to a few, and in this the Holy Ghost made good, by inward unction whatever was wanting to them in acquired knowledge. They often drew many to conversion by the simple chant of the Canonical Hours, which together with St. Matthew's Gospel, St. Dominic used frequently to expound to them."



(Eighth Conference)

“ST. DOMINIC’S LAST WILL”

Blessed Jordan and other historians of the life of St. Dominic, tell us too little about the details of the great Saint’s last days.

It seems that St. Dominic having given his final instructions, about the love of God and the love of monastic life, to the beloved young men in the convent, he was taken by the Fathers of the Community on the 4th or 5th of August to the top of a hill, called St. Mary’s, to a church and oratory having the same name. He could not rest. He felt that “his hour” had come. On the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6th, he called the Prior, Father Ventura, who came with twenty companions, and there under the special protection of the heavenly advocate, on the beautiful feast of our Lord, he addressed his last words, not only to the few who listened in silent sorrow, but to the whole Order. The substance of that most eloquent sermon of the eloquent preacher and founder of the Order of Friars Preachers, was expressed in the concluding words: “This, our beloved ones, is the inheritance that I leave you as my sons: ‘Have charity among you, hold to humility, possess voluntary poverty. God has kept me till this day in pure and unstained virginity. If you desire this blessed gift, hold yourself apart from everything that can lead to evil, for it is by watchful care in this that man is loved by God and revered by man. Be eager in your service of God. Strengthen and widen this new-born Order. Increase your love of God, and your keen observance of the Rule. Grow in holiness.’” We see in these words that came from the depth of the breaking heart, and that gave a picture of the heart of the Father to his sons, the three evangelical vows and the love

for the new-born Order. The great preacher of God's word and the great leader of Preachers said nothing about the art of preaching or teaching. He is profound. He communicates and leaves to his family the secret of the art in which he excelled, by recommending the virtues that make the soul supernaturally eloquent.

"FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES OF MONASTIC LIFE"

When the dying St. Dominic had exhorted his weeping brethren to love God and to love monastic life he specified a few of the fundamental monastic virtues.

"VOLUNTARY POVERTY"

The Divine Office for the Feast of St. Dominic, which was composed and chanted by the brethren who knew St. Dominic personally, tells us again and again in its lessons, hymns and antiphons that he was poor, that he loved poverty, that he bequeathed to his brethren as the greatest fortune, the spirit of holy poverty. "He was poor in the midst of riches, and rich in an unspotted life."

As a preacher of the Christ who had not whereon to lay His head; of Christ, the friend of the poor, who preached the Gospel to the poor and blessed the poor, of Christ who said, woe to riches and woe to the rich, St. Dominic had experienced what a blessing voluntary poverty and what a curse inordinate love of money are in a minister of God. The clergy and the sermons of the priests were ridiculed by the leaders of heresy, who sneeringly and sarcastically pointed to the avarice of those who preached Christ Crucified. Dominic, like the Apostles of old, personified the blessed poverty of Jesus in his daily public life. He was blessed. He was free from temporal cares, and the people felt that he preached because he loved Jesus, because he loved men. In his love for holy poverty, St. Dominic at the first general Chapter

in Bologna, ordained that the Order should give up its temporal possessions and that its members should be mendicants, begging for their daily bread. Because of that heroic rule, we find him one evening without bread for himself or for his followers. Calmly he went to the table and fervently he asked His Father in Heaven for His daily bread, and two angels came and brought the whole community an abundance of bread. The blessing of voluntary poverty that gives a man such a confidence in Divine Providence, that makes a man look up to heaven for bodily as well as spiritual bread, was felt by all who heard of the miracle.

“IVORY OF CHASTITY”

St. Dominic was a firm believer in the word of God, in the preaching of the word of God, in teaching the nations what Jesus taught us. He had little faith in diplomacy, and did not believe in the power of the sword for the defense of the faith and the extirpation of heresy. He founded his Order of missionaries and he instructed them well. In his final instructions, he did not dwell on external appearances or fundamental rules of sacred eloquence. He went deeper. It is the soul, the spirit, that makes preaching powerful. It is the heart that animates it and makes it the living word. It is the innocence, the purity of the heart that makes men see God, that gives man a taste for things spiritual, that makes a preacher beautiful in the eyes of men and God. Therefore always, but especially on St. Mary's Mount, when dying, did he the “Ivory of Chastity,” recommend to his Order the angelic virtue of Chastity.

These great thoughts we discover in the first words of the man of God, who, as recorded by the historian, had such innocent hands and such a pure heart. Chastity is

the gift of God. It requires watchful care. It merits the love of God and the reverence of men.

Purity of heart is indeed a blessed gift. To have it and to keep it, we must ask God to give it and to protect it. "Your will is good but your flesh is weak," said Jesus to His sleeping disciples in the Garden of Olives.

"Watch and pray." Hold yourself apart from everything that can conjure up evil. The Friars Preachers must go forth like lambs among wolves, wolves clothed often in the skin of sheep. They must change the wolves into sheep. Their dangers and temptations are great. According to Blessed Jordan, St. Dominic spoke very plainly, and told them to avoid all communication with women, especially young women, that might seem suspicious. The preacher of the Gospel of Christ must be a Christ-like Dominican. Christ was accused of great crimes, but no one dared to accuse Him of the least transgression against Chastity. Jesus dealt with and converted fallen women and transformed them into saints. Such Dominicans, St. Dominic wished his Friars to be. In the greatness of the fervor of his speech on this delicate and important subject, he, as it were, forgot himself and to drive his doctrine deep into the hearts of others, he added "God has kept me till this day in pure and unstained virginity." Hardly had the precious word fallen from his lips when humility made him blush and confess: "I should not have said that." We revere St. Dominic pure and humble, humble and pure. His innocent consecrated hands were never desecrated with filthy lucre, and his pure heart was never defiled. Therefore he was loved by God and revered by men.

"HOLD TO HUMILITY"

Humility is another virtue that Friars Preachers must practice in a high degree, to save their own souls and the souls of others. The life of an Apostle has its own dan-

gers and temptations, and the first and the greatest is pride.

We notice in reading the Gospels, that Christ repeatedly and in many ways taught His disciples whom He chose to make Apostles, to learn of Him, humility. He advised them not to seek the first place and to remain simple and humble as children. At the Last Supper He washed their feet to give them an example of humility. The power and mission to preach is great. Man feels it. The successful preacher is much praised and flattered. He is apt to fall like Lucifer.

St. Dominic had his sad experiences. Many of the missionaries in France and Italy, in their pride and subsequent blindness, had become heretics and schismatics. Therefore he had reason to fear that the power of popularity of the apostolic life might tempt some to fall like Lucifer. The humble St. Dominic, who always rejoiced when he was despised; who gave up his honorable title and went among the people as "Brother Dominic," who, dying, asked to be buried under the feet of his brethren, said: "Hold to Humility."

"HUMBLE OBEDIENCE"

"Christ humbled Himself and became obedient." Humility manifests itself in obedience. The Friars Preachers must be obedient. "How shall they preach unless they be sent." Humanly speaking, St. Dominic was so wonderfully successful in founding the New Order, because he was respectful to authority. He was a friend of Bishop Diego and Bishop Folf. He spent much time in Rome consulting the Vicar of Christ, Innocent the Third and Honorius. When he met with great difficulties in the spread of the Order, he appealed to the Holy Father, and never in vain. He wished his Friars to be always respectful to authority, to the Holy Father as well

as to immediate superiors. He had laid the foundation of his Order. He made it as broad and as universal as the Church; it was most democratic, permitting the subjects to choose their superiors and develop their Constitutions; most liberal in permitting dispensations and binding not under pain of sin. He felt that under such conditions humble respect for authority was most necessary to preserve unity and discipline. These counsels of Christ, poverty, chastity, humble obedience have helped many Friars to become great preachers, and no Friar has been a preacher or teacher working successfully, who did not observe them.



(Ninth Conference)

"ROSA PATIENTIAE"

Every evening after Compline, the liturgical night prayer, and after singing the "Salve," the community's "good-night" salutation to the Blessed Mother, its advocate in Heaven, the Dominicans sing the sweet antiphon, "O Lumen Ecclesiae." They venerate their holy Father as the light of the church, the doctor of truth, the ivory of chastity, the rose of patience, the preacher of grace and finally implore him to unite them with the saints. The end of the day reminds them of the end of life, and at the end of this mortal existence they pray to be united with the patron saint, and his triumphant family.

Very sweet and beautiful is the invocation "Rosa Patientiae," rose of patience. The rose remains fragrant and fresh among thorns. Thus, we mean to say, St. Dominic had a character and disposition rose-like, sweet and beautiful amid the many trials and tribulations of daily life. That the brethren who knew him called him "a rose of patience" proves that he must have excelled in that virtue. All who live in this vale of tears, still more those who live in a community and most of all those who work for the salvation of souls, teaching and preaching, have need of much patience and must learn to possess their souls in patience. May the great doctor teach us to know this virtue and help us to practice it, that in our private and public life, that, in the house and in the convent, in the classroom and in the ministry, we may be "roses of patience" and fill the places and delight our companions with the sweetness of that virtue.

"BODILY SUFFERINGS"

The thorns that troubled St. Dominic were many and manifold. "Man born of woman," we read in the book of the patient Job, "living for a short time is filled with many miseries." The saints although free from grievous sins were subject to these human miseries. St. Dominic knew fatigue, pain and sickness. In the last year of his life we find him three times on a sick bed. A weak stomach seems to have been his great trouble. A zealous saint who loves his work for souls, and has so much work to do, feels such bodily infirmity most keenly. On his death-bed his fever was great and the pain intense. "Supernaturally great," says the Office, "was his patience in his last sickness." There was a sweet joyful expression in his face. That is the rose of patience that fills the house with sweetness. Honor the saint by imitating the saint.

"SOCIAL SUFFERINGS"

Some of the heretics hated the humble missionary going about doing good and preaching the mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They mocked him, insulted him, threw mud at him, and even planned to injure and kill him. Those were sharp, painful thorns. They entered deep the heart of that noble Guzman, yet he possessed his soul in patience. The following incident illustrates it well. Believing that a man he met was a Catholic, although he was a heretic, St. Dominic took him for his guide. "That heretic leading them (Dominic and a few companions) to a wood, he spitefully led them astray, dragging them through thorns and brambles so that their feet and ankles became covered with blood. All this the servant of God bore with unruffled patience, breaking forth joyfully at times with the divine praises, and exhorting the others to do the same." "Be of good

cheer, dearest brethren," he would say, "put all your trust in God, for our sins have more than all been wiped out in our blood, and the victory will surely be ours." That bleeding, singing Dominic is the "Rosa Patientiae."

"THE THORNS OF COMMUNITY LIFE"

Community life as we find it in convents and monasteries has its many joys and great advantages. It brings together youthful souls, all called by Christ, all seeking Christ, to live together, to work together, to have all things in common. Christ is in the midst of such a religious community. At the same time it must be remembered that community life has its serious difficulties. In fact, it is so difficult that it cannot be kept up to a great extent for any length of time outside the Catholic Church. Non-Catholics have tried it again and again and have failed.

The thorns of community life grow when those who enter are advanced in years, and have a formed character. The thorns of community life are felt more keenly by those who are noble and refined. The thorns are felt most painfully by him who must rule and govern. St. Paul had such a heart and such a position. He tried to be all unto all, and wept with the weeping. Such was the disposition and position of St. Dominic in his new-formed community of men. He had to serve with all charity. He, according to the Rule, had "to correct the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, comfort the sick, *be patient with all.*" He must have reached the requirements of that Rule, for the brethren called him "rose of patience."

Jesus had His Judas. We know of no such traitor in the first Dominican company. We do know that some of the Friars, for want of thoughtfulness or understanding,

caused him great sorrow, and made him weep. He wept when Brother John refused to travel without spending money. He wept when the Fathers of Bologna built a convent transgressing the rule of poverty. He suffered and wept, but remained patient with all. They call him the "*Rosa Patientiae*," the "rose of patience," a rose of patience when crowned with thorns.

The virtue of patience means much more than not to be irritable and provoked to anger when the thorns of daily life prick and hurt. Patience is a virtue, a supernatural power that keeps a soul from giving way to undue sadness or discouragement when the cross is very heavy. Not one thorn but a crown of thorns was placed on the head of Brother Dominic, when he gave almost all his time to the humble mission work among the Albigenses. Don Diego left him, returned to Osma and died. Don Diego and Dominic were like two holy brothers. Together they had led the reform of the Canons; together they had traveled to Rome; together they worked on the mission field. We know not who of the two was the leader. Don Diego was a Bishop. Brother Dominic seems to have been the soul of the mission work. He prayed and argued all night, and converted the host. To him is ascribed the foundation of the convent of Prouille. The leaving of Don Diego was for Brother Dominic a heavy blow and the death of the Bishop made the blow almost crushing. When the news of his death reached the mission band, the Cistercian Abbots returned to their monasteries. St. Dominic was left almost alone in the work of preaching, so great, so necessary and so difficult.

The difficulties did not break the courage of the young athlete of the Lord, but inspired him to fight with all his might. "He worked," says Blessed Jordan, "with all his strength to win souls for Christ, and felt in his heart a wonderful, almost incredible longing for the salvation of all men. He was fearless, almost reckless about his per-

sonal safety. When warned about dangers, he smiled and answered, "I am not worthy of the crown of martyrdom."

That crown of thorns was pressed into the consecrated head of the valiant Dominic, deeper and deeper by the fact that God seemed to have abandoned him. He saw little fruit of his preaching and teaching, and praying, and weeping and bleeding. He felt his loneliness in a strange land, working for ungrateful people, but he was patient, "a rose of patience." He suffered and persevered. This endurance makes Brother Dominic, the "novus Athleta Domini" of the *Matin's* hymn, "pugnat verbo" who fights and keeps on fighting, preaching, and weeping, and praying, and working miracles.

"The loving favorite of Christian faith,
The hallowed wrestler, gentle to his
own and to his enemies terrible."

St. Dominic remained sweet and gentle as a rose amidst these thorns, and after a long struggle, the thorns produced roses. Brother Dominic the patient wrestler conquered. His theory that the preaching of the Gospel and not the sword or worldly diplomacy must win the souls of the heretics, triumphed. The patient Dominic is surrounded by an army of such white athletes of the Lord. They are his own crown of glory.



(Tenth Conference)

"AQUAM SAPIENTIAE"

St. Dominic, the "Lumen Ecclesiae," the "doctor veritatis," enlightened his Friars. He taught them to love God, and to advance in that love of God by loving monastic life, to save souls, preaching the Gospel by example, observing the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and humble obedience. He, moreover, helped them to obtain the grace of God, to lead that monastic and apostolic life. We call him the "preacher of grace," who gave out freely "the water of wisdom," and we implore him to unite us to the Saints, "nos junge beatis." The grace of God is well called the "water of wisdom." Christ Himself used that figure of speech, saying to the woman at Jacob's well, "he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever." To obtain that living water which washes clean and refreshes, and becomes a "fountain of water springing up into everlasting life," we must pray. Christ said, "if thou didst know, thou wouldst have *asked*." We do know! We must ask! We must pray! "Ask and you shall receive."

"ST. DOMINIC WAS A MAN OF PRAYER"

The Divine Office says, "He spent nights in the Church, sleeping little and praying, sometimes kneeling and sometimes prostrate upon the floor." Artists picture him, the preacher and the founder of the Order of Preachers, kneeling before a Crucifix. The great Preacher spent more time praying than preaching. He preached well because he prayed well.

St. Dominic, the great preacher of grace, taught the Christian world a new form of prayer. We find his

Rosary in the hands of almost every Catholic. St. Dominic, the man of prayer and the preacher of prayer, did not leave us a book on prayer, as other saints have done. He gave us a book of prayer in his example. We must learn from him by studying carefully, minutely, the example he gave.

We read he spent his nights in the sanctuary. How full of meaning are the words, "*pernox cum Christo, properium non possidebat lectulum.*" He spent the nights with Christ, not having a bed of his own. Christ called the Temple, the home of His Father, a house of prayer. There is no religion without prayer and there cannot be a religious service without prayer. The Temple of old has become more holy since Christ dwells in the tabernacle. St. Dominic loved to pray in the Church because he had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Brother John of Bologna tells us that when serving his Mass, he often saw "the great tears trickle from his eyes, down his cheeks, as he turned to take the ablutions after receiving the Body of Christ." Dominicus loved the "Dominus" present in the Blessed Sacrament. St. Dominic spent the hours of the night in prayer. In that he imitated Jesus, his Master, Who late in the evening entered the Garden of Olives, according to His custom to pray. The hours of the night have always been the favorite hours for prayer, for saints, monks, and nuns living in monasteries. The silence, stillness and darkness of the night seem to dispose the soul for communing intimately and familiarly with God.

St. Dominic spent hours of the night praying. His body took part in the worship of God as well as his soul. Brother John tells us, how he once "kept diligent watch for seven nights running, in order to see for himself, in what manner our holy Father used to spend his night watches." This is how he describes it: "Standing at one time and groaning heavily, or with his face down

upon the church pavement, he prolonged his prayer until sleep overcame him, then standing up he would visit each altar in turn, and so keep on until midnight, when he would softly visit the sleeping brethren, and cover them up when he saw fit." These and similar attitudes are familiar to those who lead a monastic life. Monastic life especially Dominican is filled with ceremony from the "Benedicamus Domino" early in the morning rousing the brethren from sleep to bless God, to the "Salve Regina" procession in the evening.

"HE SPOKE WITH GOD"

Those few words give us the very essence of the prayer of St. Dominic. He is not just speaking to God, he is not merely listening to God speaking, he is speaking *with* God in most intimate conversation. We cannot do it without the aid of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit must help our infirmity. It is indescribable. It is too spiritual for human words. The Holy Spirit helped St. Dominic to speak with his God.

The assistance of the Holy Spirit whom we always invoke before prayer, does not exclude human means, such as pious books and oral prayers. What books did St. Dominic use? We read that St. Dominic often expounded to the brethren the Office of the day, together with St. Matthew's Gospel. In those days there were few books. The few they had were the very best. Here we may add a prudent remark Blessed Jordan made to a brother who had asked him for the best means to pray well. "Good brother, those means are the best which prompt us to readiest compunction, so mind you use them without stint, for what stirs your affections most will benefit your prayers most."

**"ABOUT WHAT DID ST. DOMINIC SPEAK WITH
GOD"**

Very many feel discouraged because they cannot speak with God. They try to speak with God about things divine. They aim too high. St. Dominic spoke with God very often about what concerned himself or his family in religion or his mission work. Thus when he was in doubt whether to build a Monastery for the Fathers or for the Nuns, he said, "well let me consult once more the Lord before giving a final answer." The next morning he said, "Brethren, we must by all means build a monastery for the sisters, even if we should be forced to discontinue the building of our own convent." He had spoken with the Lord about the matter.

Blessed Jordan was a disciple of St. Dominic, and learned, no doubt, from his holy Father, how to pray. Of him we read: "whether in the convent or outside, he devoted himself entirely to contemplation, from which he derived great peace of soul. As he plodded his weary way along the roads, it was his unvarying custom to busy himself with prayer and contemplation. He enjoined this practice on all his subjects, bidding them to select some sacred mystery and afterwards say what noteworthy thoughts had occurred to them." Thus St. Dominic prayed and taught his Friars to pray.

**"THE PRAYERS OF ST. DOMINIC WERE
POWERFUL"**

The beautiful, sinless life and the great lasting work of St. Dominic are the blessed fruits of his almost perpetual communings with God. Often God answered his prayers in miraculous ways. Brother Rudolph tells us that towards the end of his life, St. Dominic made this significant statement: "God has given me always what-

ever I prayed for." "Why then," said the Brother, "do you not ask God to give you Professor Oswald who is so good, and whom you need so much?" "Let us pray together," answered the saint. Together they spent the night in prayer. The very next morning the Professor made his application to join the Order.

This story shows not only the power of the saint's prayer, but also his great humility asking the brother to pray with him.

Another incident that shows the grateful, prayerful character of the holy Father is the following: On one of his mission journeys, he and his companion Blessed Bertrand met a few Germans going in the same direction. St. Dominic humbly accepted their generous hospitality. To reward them with things spiritual for their kindness, he asked God and obtained the grace to speak to them about God in their own language.

ST. DOMINIC SPOKE WITH GOD,
ST. DOMINIC SPOKE ABOUT GOD,
ST. DOMINIC COMMUNICATED TO OTHERS THE
FRUIT OF HIS CONTEMPLATION.



(Eleventh Conference)

"ST. DOMINIC AND THE BLESSED SACRAMENT"

St. Dominic was a man of great faith. He understood that he could not save souls without the grace of God. He therefore was not only a doctor of the great Apostle's Creed, but also a preacher of grace, to make the waters of divine wisdom flow freely. To save souls he prayed more than he preached. To save souls he taught the people to pray.

A source and means of grace is the Blessed Sacrament. There we have Christ with us to give us the "living water" and the "bread of life," that we may possess life everlasting. St. Dominic made the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, so evidently apostolic and Catholic, truly Dominican.

That the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the great mystery of our faith and the life giving heart of the Church, is Dominican, is well known. The works of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas of Aquin, the most illustrious son of St. Dominic, have helped to establish this idea. St. Thomas wrote the learned treatise on the Holy Eucharist, and made it so thorough and complete that very little has been added by the doctors that lived since his day. St. Thomas sang the love of Jesus in the Sacrament of love, in hymns so sweet and classic that no other hymns have found popularity in the Sanctuary. This devotion St. Thomas inherited from St. Dominic, the spiritual Father whom he loved and venerated so much.

"PERNOX CUM CHRISTO"

To explain St. Dominic's devotion to Christ in the Tabernacle, we have not many works. The few words we find in the Divine Office, are, like all the works of the

Fathers and of the scholastics, so full of meaning that they contain whole chapters. Reflect on the words "pernox cum Christo," he spent his nights with Christ in the sanctuary, and you will understand that he loved his Christ in the Eucharist. Beautiful is the story of Blessed Imelda, the Dominican child, who loved her Jesus dearly, and the longing of whose heart brought the Sacred Host to her heart. Great was the devotion of St. Catherine, the seraphic daughter of St. Dominic, who during the whole Lenten season, took no other than this Supersubstantial Bread. Touching is the last act of the Eucharistic Doctor, St. Thomas, who rose from his death-bed and fell upon his knees to salute, adore and receive Viaticum. All these examples of heroic piety reflect the loyalty of St. Dominic's children to his example as stated in the words "pernox cum Christo." St. Dominic dwelt for hours and hours, night after night, with Jesus in the Tabernacle.

Knowing from experience that the hours of the night spent with Jesus are sweet and holy, he founded monasteries of Perpetual Adoration. In these monasteries, the Blessed Sacrament exposed or not exposed, the nuns spend the hours of the night with Christ, "pernox cum Christo." This adoration radiates such light and love and force and attraction that the monasteries have kept up their angelic occupation for centuries, and that they have grown in number. Today we have more than four thousand Dominican Nuns who inspired and encouraged by the holy Father, "pernox cum Christo," spend the hours of the night watching with Christ and praying for the salvation of souls.

St. Dominic was a magnetic leader. His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and his example of visiting the altars and spending hours in prayer was imitated not only by the cloistered nuns, but also by the preaching Friars. "When they had finished Compline and sung the

'Salve,' they visited all the altars in turn, prostrating themselves before each. Seldom did they rise from prayer without having first obtained some special grace from God." That was the Holy Eucharistic fervor, St. Thomas found when he entered the Order. That spirit he made his own, and expressed in his "Tantum ergo Sacramentum," in his "O Salutaris Hostia," in his "Lauda Sion Salvatorem."

St. Dominic wept when celebrating Mass. Large tears rolled down his cheeks after Communion. Tears are the words of the heart. The tears of St. Dominic coming from the silent deep heart, that receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, say: "Jesus, You know all things, You know that I love You."

The example of the holy Father celebrating the holy mysteries with such heartfelt devotion was noticed and imitated by the sons. We read in the "Lives of the Brethren," "after Matins (chanted about midnight), some betook themselves to their books, fewer to their beds, most hastened at once to prepare for daily confession, before offering up the holy mysteries. At daybreak the bell rang for the saying of Mass, whereupon several ran to each priest for the favor of being allowed to serve." We read in the history of St. Thomas, that he often served Mass after saying Mass. That indeed is admirable in such a great learned doctor. We know that he was not alone in thus devoutly offering his humble service. Those beautiful manifestations of faith and fervor come from the pure source, the heart of St. Dominic. He preached grace effectively by teaching how to celebrate Mass and receive Holy Communion. He always taught by example and by word.

"MASS THE GREAT MEANS OF GRACE"

Holy Communion we are told by theologians benefits first and most the person who receives it. It is the spir-

itual food of the spiritual life. The life of him who eats that Bread and drinks that Blood, is maintained and strengthened by it. Mass is different. Mass is a sacrifice and the sacrifice may be offered for the temporal and spiritual benefit of others. No priest can say Mass well without profiting by it personally. He may, however, apply in a great measure the fruits of the sacrifice to others. St. Dominic knew the power of that sacrifice. He used the chalice to work miracles for the salvation of souls.

To show the fruit of the Mass celebrated by the saint, we shall give an account of one of the most remarkable miracles he worked. Blessed Cecilia who "was present all the while and saw everything with her own eyes, and heard all with her own ears," gives us a minute account of it. Pope Honorius had given St. Dominic and three Cardinals, the difficult task to gather the Nuns, scattered all over the city, and to place them in the monastery of St. Sixtus, and make them continue common life. On Ash Wednesday morning the convent was formally opened with religious solemnity. When all were assembled and about to begin the ceremony, Napoleon, the nephew of one of the three Cardinals, fell from his horse and was killed. St. Dominic sprinkled him with holy water; next he told Brother Tancred and the others he had brought with him, to prepare the altar for him to say Mass; then St. Dominic offered Holy Mass with an abundance of tears. On coming to the Elevation of the Lord's Body, holding it uplifted in his hands, as he generally did, St. Dominic was seen to be raised a span from the ground. When the Mass was finished, he went back to the corpse, knelt down and wept much while he prayed at the bier. He got up and made the sign of the Cross over the body, and called aloud, "O arise!" and instantly in the sight of all those that had crowded in to see what would happen, the young man rose up sound and well.

A little reflection on this miracle shows that St. Dominic had the greatest confidence in Mass. He calmly said Mass when others were weeping and fainting. Having sacrificed for the dead man, having united himself sacramentally with Christ, he commanded the dead to rise in the name of Jesus Christ. That gives us a beautiful and true picture of St. Dominic. Such a miracle worked in the Eternal City in the presence of the Cardinals, explains to us the religious respect the highest authorities had for this otherwise unknown missionary, born in Spain and working with only ordinary success in France. God made use of the miracle, to teach not only the nuns in the new monastery, but the whole Church, that He was, in a special way, with Dominic. In the Divine Office of the feast, reference is made to this miracle: "In Rome he raised from the dead three persons," and again in the prayer, "O spem miram," "O thou who didst shine illustrious by so many miracles wrought on the bodies of the sick, bring us the help of Christ to heal our sick souls."

To understand the innocent holy life of St. Dominic, and his apostolic work for the Order and through the Order, we must always remember that he loved the Lord, spent hours of the night with Christ, received Holy Communion with tears of love, and offered up after long preparation and exceptional faith and confidence, the Blood of the Lamb, given for the remission of sins and the salvation of souls.



(Twelfth Conference)

“ST. DOMINIC AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY”

Great artists like a Fra Angelico pictured St. Dominic kneeling before a Crucifix praying and meditating and these pictures are true, because the saint spent much time thus kneeling and praying, and the time thus spent influenced mightily his life and his work.

Other artists picture the saint kneeling, looking up to a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding in her arms the Child divine and holding the Rosary in her hand. That picture is historically true. The Church likes it. It decorates thousands of Churches and Chapels. To omit the devotion of St. Dominic to the Mother of God and her perpetual help and protection over him would be very unscientific and defective. The Evangelists, especially St. Luke, in telling us about the Mother of the Saviour, bring the Saviour nearer to us, and help us to understand Christ and to understand the Church of Christ. The first historians of the life of St. Dominic and of his Order, tell us much about the marvelous influence of that heavenly Queen, and we love it. It is beautiful and we know that it is substantially true. All Christian saints had a tender devotion to Mary, and Mary helped them all. You can no more write the inner life of a Saint without bringing in Mary, than you can write the life of Jesus without speaking of His Mother. That is especially true of St. Dominic, coming from Catholic Spain which is so tenderly consecrated to the Blessed Lady; living in the thirteenth century, the age of faith, having a providential mission in the Church of which Mary is the Queen.

**"ST. DOMINIC THE PREACHER OF GRACE, TOOK
HIS REFUGE TO MARY THE MOTHER OF GRACE"**

Blessed Cecilia who "took the habit from St. Dominic's own hands, and made her profession into his own hands," tells us how the Blessed Mother appeared to the holy Father walking through the dormitory of the visiting Friars, sprinkling them with holy water and blessing them. To the question of the Saint: "who art thou?" she answered, "I am she whom you greet every morning when you say, 'turn then our advocate' I then prostrate myself before my Son for the preservation of the Order." St. Dominic knelt every evening before that Blessed Mother, and greeted her, saying the "Salve," Hail holy Queen, Mother of Mercy. That was one of his favorite prayers, and we can easily see the reason why he liked it. It expresses the sentiments of his loving and, often sorrowful heart. He, going about during the day, saw the many tears of the heretics and the persecution of the faithful. It was a vale of tears. In that vale of tears he felt that he was an exile, abandoned, hated and persecuted in a strange land. For him, the Blessed Mother was life, sweetness and hope. To her he did send up his sighs and mourning. With his whole soul he implored her to turn her eyes of mercy upon him and be his advocate.

Often St. Dominic knelt praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary as we see him in the Rosary picture, and said his "Ave Maria's" and added the "pray for us sinners." The conversion of sinners, the salvation of souls was the burning desire that kept him an exile in the vale of tears, that made him groan and moan. Devoutly he implored the Mary full of grace, refuge of sinners and help of Christians to pray for him and for the sinners for whom he was willing, even anxious to give his life.

The example of the holy Father taking his refuge in the Mother of Mercy, and making her his advocate in

heaven was imitated by his first Friars. "Who shall tell of their devotion to the Blessed Virgin," exclaims the writer of the "Lives of the Brethren." "When the Matins of her Office had been devoutly recited, they hastened lovingly to her altar, so that not a moment of time might be wasted, which could be devoted to prayer. After Matins and Compline they girded her altar in a triple row, and kneeling thus they frequently commended themselves and the Order to her protection. They had her image and her Son's in their cells, so that whether reading or praying or sleeping, they might cast loving glances upon them."

Beautiful is the picture of the white-robed Friars, standing in Choir and chanting the Office of the Blessed Lady. More beautiful is the picture of the white-robed Friars forming a triple row around her altar, moved not by obedience but by love and private devotion. Thus prayed St. Dominic, thus prayed a Blessed Albert the Great, thus prayed a St. Thomas of Aquin. Blessed Jordan ordained that the "Salve" should be sung after Compline as "a parting greeting devoutly paid to the Queen of the Universe, special advocate of the Order."

"MARY HELPER"

The most gracious advocate in Heaven turned her eyes of mercy upon St. Dominic. She prayed for him. The second part of the Rosary picture, the Blessed Mother appearing, is substantially true.

The "Lives of the Brethren" begins with "the Foundation of the Order," and the heading of the first chapter is "the Order was the fruit of the Blessed Virgin's prayers." The opening lines are: "it is clear from the careful study of Holy Scripture, that the Blessed Virgin is a compassionate advocate and powerful help of mankind. By her prayers the fire of God's wrath kindled against

sinner is tempered lest they perish, and countless blessings are showered down upon the world. Rightly therefore is she compared to a cloud between the consuming fire of God's justice and guilty man, softening by her tender influence the heat of His wrath." One of the examples of this is the fact revealed to many of God's servants, that the Order of St. Dominic was raised by Almighty God's mercy for the salvation of souls, through her all-prevailing intercession.

The historian quotes some of the visions the servants of God had announcing the coming of St. Dominic and his Order, as the Angel Gabriel announced the coming of the Saviour. These servants saw the Mother of mercy kneeling, interceding and pleading, and heard the Lord answer, "I know that sinners are being lost for the want of preachers, having none to break to them the bread of Holy Scriptures, to teach the truth, and open the books which are at present shut to them; wherefore yielding to thy entreaties, I will send them new messengers, an Order of Preachers, who shall call the people, and lead them to everlasting joy."

Many and beautiful are the stories told, to show that the Blessed Lady inspired the steps of St. Dominic and protected the Order. She loved it because it began and ended the day with her name. Mary helped and formed the convent of Prouille, the first of the Order, and the convent was dedicated to and placed under the protection of Mary. Mary helped St. Dominic especially by giving him learned, eloquent saints, young men to assist him to lay the foundation of the Order, to fill it with light and glory.

"BLESSED REGINALD"

Blessed Jordan tells us that in the year 1218, St. Dominic met in Rome, Master Reginald, a dean of St. Aignon's at Orleans. Master Reginald became seriously

ill. In that sickness, considered incurable, "the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of Mercy, the ever Virgin Mary, appeared to him in visible form, and cured him." That cure was an answer to the prayer of St. Dominic. Reginald received the habit which he had seen in its complete form in his delirious illness, and became at once, St. Dominic's most efficient co-laborer. Reginald zealous and eloquent, had a great influence in Bologna and Paris, but, alas! died young. He is beatified.

"BLESSED JORDAN"

Shortly before Blessed Reginald died, he received into the Order, Jordan of Saxony. Jordan tells us in a letter, how he and his most beloved friend, Henry, entered the Order: "The glorious Virgin Mary gave him to me, for when I had resolved in my heart to join the Order, I asked our Lady to give him to me as a brother. She gave him to me not in virtue of my prayers, but because of her tender mercies. Mary brought Jordan and Henry to Blessed Reginald. Together they received the habit. Jordan became the youngest, the most eloquent, the most saintly, the most successful of all Master Generals in the history of seven hundred years.

"BLESSED ALBERT THE GREAT"

Blessed Jordan praying and working to build up the new Order, gave the habit to more than one thousand students and professors. Among them was a talented noble young man, known to the world as Albert the Great, and known to the Church as Blessed Albert. The Divine Office tells us that Blessed Albert was most devoted to the Virgin Mother of God, and that she inspired him to join the Order. Blessed Albert was the teacher of St. Thomas of Aquin whose devotion to Mary is well known.

St. Dominic feeling his exile in this vale of tears implored the help of the Queen of Mercy and she turned her eyes of mercy upon him and brought to him her most illustrious sons of that, the greatest of Christian centuries, and she inspired him to teach and preach her rosary, a devotion most simple and sublime which the Church made her own and which has become the most favorite devotion of the Church.

This very year when the Eucharistic Congress of Italy was celebrated in St. Dominic's Church in Bologna, the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, bestowed "a special indulgence from the treasury of the Church on all the faithful, who, in presence of the August Sacrament in which our Lord Jesus Christ lies hid beneath the Eucharistic veils, shall recite the rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary instituted by the Patriarch St. Dominic in honor of the Mother of God."

"We mercifully grant in the Lord in perpetuity to all the faithful, who, having contritely confessed their sins and worthily received Holy Communion, a Plenary Indulgence and remission as often as they shall devoutly recite a third part of the Rosary in presence of the Sacrament of Christ's Most Sacred Body."



(Thirteenth Conference)

“NOS JUNGE BEATIS”

The eventful life of St. Dominic is full of heavenly visions, which make it easy to meditate upon it, and to illustrate it. One of the most heavenly of these heavenly pictures is the following:

“St. Dominic returned to his prayers and was caught up in spirit from where he was standing, to the throne of God, and there he beheld Our Lord, and the Blessed Virgin sitting on His right Hand, whilst she appeared to our Holy Father to be wearing a mantle of deep blue color. As he gazed around he saw religious men of every Order in the Church, standing in God’s presence, but not one of his own family, so he began to weep bitterly and would not presume to come near our Lord or His holy Mother. Thereupon she made a sign with her hand to draw nigh, but still he did not dare to do so until our Lord also beckoned unto him, then he came up and threw himself before them, weeping as if his heart would break. Then Christ bade him arise, and asked him gently, ‘why weep-est thou so sorrowfully?’ ‘I am grieving,’ said St. Dominic, ‘because I see here members of every religious Order, but of my own, not one.’ Then the Lord said: ‘and would you see your Order?’ To this the saint answered trembling ‘Yes Lord, of a surety I would.’ Placing His hand lovingly upon the Blessed Virgin’s shoulder, Christ replied: ‘I have given over your Order to my Mother’s care.’ At this the Blessed Virgin drew back her mantle, and opening it wide before St. Dominic, it seemed to enclose nearly all the heavenly country, so vast was it, and beneath it he saw a great host of his brethren. Casting himself down, St. Dominic returned hearty thanks to Christ and His Holy Mother. Soon the vision passed

away and once again regaining his natural consciousness, he rang the bell for Matins. When the morning Office was over, he summoned the brethren to the Chapter house, and there spoke to them with burning words, exhorting them to love and reverence ever the Blessed Virgin, and amongst the rest, he told them of his vision."

There are so many great truths contained in this picture, that we must meditate upon it as we meditate upon the parables of Christ.

St. Dominic on his long, lonely, difficult journey, neglected not to keep his eyes fixed on heaven. The Lord was good to him, and from time to time encouraged His faithful apostle. As St. Paul saw the heavens opened and saw the secrets of the third heavens in ecstasy of joy; as St. John saw that new Jerusalem and the vast number of the Saints in the white robe of salvation, thus St. Dominic got a glimpse of the heavenly joy and glory of his family.

St. Dominic wept bitterly when he saw none of his brethren. Those precious tears tell us how truly and dearly he loved his own. He was not satisfied seeing the brethren doing well in the world, spreading his Order and growing in fame. His one great and only end and aim was the salvation of souls, the salvation of his own soul, and the salvation of the souls of his Friars and the salvation of the souls to whom they preached. When he saw not one of his brethren among the Saints, he wept bitterly feeling that his work was a failure.

In the second vision St. Dominic saw a vast number of his own glorious children under the mantle of the glorious Queen. That consoled him and that consoles us. What he saw in a vision we know to be true. The vision is changed into a great feast, the feast of all Dominican Saints. On that Dominican festival we see the picture, and behold standing next to the Lord, St. Dominic himself. Of all the Dominican Saints he is the first and the

greatest, because he loved God and the neighbor most. He is the Founder and Father of "that sacred Order of Preachers, flourishing in uprightness, renowned for learning, fruitful in virtue." He is "the trunk of the blossoming tree in the paradise of the Church that delights it with its charms, fills it with its plenty, and refreshes it with its agreeable fruits." In the Dominican mansion of the house of the Father, the "Dominicus" resembles most the "DOMINUS" in glory.

We see in that Dominican mansion in the House of the Father, a St. Peter of Verona, who received the holy habit from St. Dominic, who in days of innocent childhood, learned well the "Credo" the great creed of the Apostles, who preached that "Creed" fearlessly in the land of the heretics, who defended that "Creed" valiantly against the learned leaders of the enemy, who died for his "Creed," and who in dying put his finger in the blood of his heart, and wrote in the sand "Credo." Near him stands St. John of Cologne, who, like St. Peter, dyed the white habit in the blood of love, and received the crown of martyrdom. These two holding in their hands the palm of victory, lead an army, a very great army of martyrs to the Lord, who is their crown and their reward.

In that picture of the Dominican mansion of the Kingdom of Heaven, we see the Christ King in the centre, the glorious Queen to His right, St. Dominic to His left, and a St. Pius with the triple papal crown followed by an Antoninus, an Innocent, a Benedict and many, many more. They are the good pastors who loved Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and who fed His lambs and His sheep—"beloved of God and man, of fairest fame and crowned with the laurels of learning. These are the men whom the benignity of the Father has especially sought out amid the countless throng of the divine worshippers for extolling the glory of His name and preserving the salvation of the faithful."



ANGELS DISTRIBUTING BREAD AT THE PRAYER OF ST. DOMINIC.



THE DEATH OF ST. DOMINIC.

In that heavenly Dominican picture we see more clearly than a St. Dominic could see, the Doctor Angelic with his Master, Blessed Albert, a St. Raymond and blessed companions numerous as the stars in the firmament—"men who were unceasingly engaged in the study of the Sacred Writings, the spiritual advancement of souls, the divine worship and holy contemplation, ever bent on the preaching of the Gospel, to spread the light of the divine word over the world."

In that picture St. Dominic saw looking into the future, what we behold reviewing the past; St. Hyacinth with his brother Blessed Ceslaus, St. Vincent Ferrer with a St. Louis Bertrand, apostles who with the gospel of peace conquered and added nations in the old and in the new world to the Kingdom of Christ, "men who devoting ever their hearts' affections to heavenly love, published throughout the world the virtue of the Divine Name, and toiled with watchful care for the extension of the Christian faith and worship."

That picture of Dominican Saints under the protecting mantle of the loving Mother, is made more angelic by the souls of the seraphic Catherines, the Frater Amandus, the Fra Angelico, souls who loved the Lord, and knew how to explain that love in books and pictures.

There are St. Agnes, St. Rose and a legion of Virgin Saints, who have the name of Jesus on their brows, who follow the Lamb closely, and sing canticles so sweet that only virgin saints can sing them, prudent virgins, "who glory in nothing else save the cross of our Lord Jesus, and treading under foot all worldly pomps and pleasures, living soberly, uprightly, devoutly and chastely, begging their very bread for substance, they have become living patterns for Christ's poor in all evangelic perfection."

These legions of Dominican apostles and martyrs, doctors and confessors, mystics and virgins are led by St. Dominic to the Christ-King of glory, and adoringly sing

the "Te Deum laudamus;" to the Queen of Queens and say with full understanding, seeing what they say, "Hail full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou amongst women," and with the Queen turning to Jesus, they repeat the "Magnificat anima mea Dominum, quia fecit mihi Magna."

When St. Dominic had seen this vision, he was as happy as the Apostles were when they had seen the Transfiguration of the Lord on Thabor. He rang the bell for Matins. He called together the Friars, to praise that great God. "Come let us praise the Lord with joy." The object of our praise is almost every day Christ the King. If it is the feast of an Evangelist, we say again and again, let us adore Christ the King of Evangelists. If it is the feast of a martyr, "come let us adore the King of Martyrs," or of a confessor or of angels, Christ the glorious King is always the object of our adoration. On the feast of all Dominican Saints, the invitatory is, "let us adore Christ the King of Kings, the crown of all the Saints."

When Matins were over St. Dominic called the Friars into the Chapter Room and exhorted them to love and reverence the Blessed Virgin, and told them of his vision. It was the "contemplata aliis tradere." His loving apostolic heart felt that he had to communicate the good news received in the contemplation, to his brethren. Thus he enthused them to keep up the "laudare," benedicere," and the "praedicare." That vision of heaven made all understand more clearly the beauty and sanctity of the end of the Order, "ad salutem animarum."



(Fourteenth Conference)

**"NOVUS ATHLETA DOMINI; COLLAUDETUR
DOMINICUS"**

Dominic the new white athlete, the victorious athlete of the Lord must be praised. He is the light of the Church and the Church must praise him. He is the Leader and the Father of the Order of Preachers, and the Order of Preachers must lead the Church in praising him.

Blessed Jordan wrote, "I knew the saintly Master Dominic intimately before I entered the Order. I saw him often. He was my confessor. At his advice I became a deacon, took the habit four years after the Order was established." Blessed Jordan teaches us how to honor the holy Father. Blessed Jordan the youthful Master General of the Order after the death of the holy Founder, honored him by praying and imploring his assistance; secondly by venerating his relics; thirdly by respecting scrupulously every rule of St. Dominic and by developing the Constitutions carefully, and fourthly by spreading the Order, seeking and receiving many well qualified novices, and founding new monasteries, new provinces and new missions.

Edifying is the tender loving filial devotion Blessed Jordan had to his spiritual Father, even before he was beatified or canonized. Dominic was his favorite saint. "Thou, after the Blessed Queen of Heaven art beyond all saints, my hope, my comfort and my refuge." His devotion inspired him to compose a long prayer, of which we give these few extracts: "Holy Father, St. Dominic, perfect model of a saintly life, of a faithful confessor, of an illustrious preacher; most beloved virgin-disciple of the Lord in your lifetime, my favorite saint among the saints, help my poor sinful soul."

"O blessed soul of St. Dominic, surrounded by the blessed, attracted by your example, stirred up by your admonitions, enlightened by your doctrine, elevated by your preaching, vivify my soul. You have the power to help; you have the will to help; you are with Jesus; you can help."

"St. Dominic most perfect religious from the moment of Baptism; instructed by a holy Mother; educated by a holy priest; called to give body and soul undefiled to Jesus; vowed to a life of perfection; evangelic like Jesus in purity, and penance; burning with love for the salvation of souls; founding, thus enflamed the Order of Preachers, be the custodian of this house of the family of the Lord. Present us to the glorious Queen, the Blessed Virgin Mary."

To honor St. Dominic, Blessed Jordan prayed and worked to have the Church confer upon him the greatest title that can be given to mortal man, the title "Saint." In the month of August, 1234, when he was sick in the city of Strasburg, he received the joyful news of the canonization, and immediately wrote to his spiritual daughter, Blessed Diana: "I received the news good and sweet, worthy of all acceptance, about the canonization of our most blessed Father, and I rejoice with you in the Lord and I thank God. We celebrated the feast for the honor of God and for the honor of our most blessed Father, giving thanks to the Son of God who is wonderful in His Saints and who is glorious all in all."

"THE RELICS OF ST. DOMINIC"

Blessed Jordan loved St. Dominic, and showed his sacred love for the Saint by honoring his remains. On the day of his death, St. Dominic expressed the desire to be buried under the feet of his disciples, and the disciples gave his blessed body a very humble burial. Signs of

sanctity were perceived and miracles were wrought at his tomb, but the brethren were like the doubting Thomas, afraid to believe that which they most sincerely hoped to be true. "It occurred to the minds of some of our brethren," writes blessed Jordan, "that such miracles ought neither to be received nor acknowledged, lest it should seem to savor of the greed of gain, and so it came to pass that the glory of our blessed Father, St. Dominic, was suffered to remain in obscurity during twelve years."

In the year 1233, the Almighty Himself brought about an opportunity of "stirring up the slothfulness of the brethren." The old Church and Convent had been dismantled and "the tomb of God's servant lay exposed to the open day." A new tomb was prepared and Pope Gregory gave permission to transfer the sacred body, and delegated the Archbishop of Ravenna to preside at the solemnity. God prepared the hearts of the faithful by working many miracles. "The blind received their sight at his tomb, the lame walked, paralytics stood up, the dumb spoke, devils forsook the possessed, fevers ceased, in a word, every evil was overcome, and St. Dominic's holiness published to mankind."

"The solemn day fixed for the translation of the great preacher and doctor, at length came," writes Blessed Jordan, and his words are eloquent. "The venerable Archbishop stood by with a number of Bishops and prelates, while a countless throng of devout clients of every tongue, with the armed manhood of Bologna flocked around." "The brethren anxious and pale were praying in secret, fearing when there was no ground for fear." "The stone was hardly lifted, ere a wondrous fragrance began to exhale from the coffin, reaching even the surrounding crowd." Notice now the poetic description: "The lid was ordered to be removed and disclosed an ark of ointments, a paradise of perfumes, a bower of roses, a bed of lilies and violets, far surpassing in fragrance all the

flowers of the earth." "In mute wonder all fell with one accord upon their knees, while tears of joy flowed freely upon every side." "The remains were borne along and laid in a marble tomb, embalmed only in their sweet smelling spices." "Amid the blow of trumpets, and gleams of countless torches, a stately procession was formed, while upon every side rang out the cries of 'Blessed be Jesus Christ.'"

We feel that there is life, love, spirit, admiration and veneration in this letter, which the Blessed Master General sent to the whole Order. It must have dispelled all fear and given full conviction of the sanctity of the Founder.

"WORK FOR THE SPREAD OF THE ORDER"

Blessed Jordan showed his love for his favorite Saint, St. Dominic, by working for his Order.

When St. Dominic died the Order was new, and the Constitutions very unfinished. Blessed Jordan took up the unfinished work with great energy and a holy respect for every regulation the Founder had made. He understood his mission. The foundation was laid and well laid. He did not touch it. Blessed Jordan ruled the Order fifteen years and every year, except two, when he was sick, he presided at a general chapter. He always traveled on foot, preaching to the students, to the people and to the clergy whenever he had an opportunity. He was the soul of these general chapters. He knew the mind of St. Dominic, and having been at the first chapter in Bologna, and at almost all that followed, he understood the foundation of the Order. His prudence and discretion influenced much the Dominican Constitutions. An historian calls him, "a co-founder of the Order."

Blessed Jordan honored St. Dominic by giving the habit to more than a thousand well qualified young men.

“He traveled over the whole world and beyond the seas, preaching Jesus Christ by word and example, and is reckoned as having drawn over a thousand subjects to the Order.” “Beloved of God and man and devoted to the Holy Roman Church, he called on priests and people alike to do penance and take hold of the Kingdom of God.” “No one ever drew so many men of letters and clerics of note to any Order as he did to the Order of Preachers.”

Blessed Jordan was eloquent. “The word of God fell from his lips with such spirit and fervor that his equal could hardly be found. It was clearly the result of a rare grace.” But he did not trust in his eloquence. He had faith in prayer; especially in the prayers of the cloistered Nuns. His letters to the Community of St. Agnes and to Blessed Diana, a member of that community, show us how he got these nuns interested and kept them interested in his special mission, “fishing for novices.” He writes: “I recommend to you and to the sisters that you ask the Lord constantly to touch the hearts of the clerics and to draw them to Himself, for their own salvation, for the glory of God, His Church, and for the growth of the Order. I find them very cold, and have up to the present one only.” A little later he writes to the same nuns; “Celebrate a feast and give thanks to the Giver of all good gifts, for the loving and merciful Lord has blessed us beyond expectation. When I had preached here for some time to the students in Padua, and saw hardly any fruit, I got discouraged and considered returning home. And lo, and behold! suddenly the Lord was pleased to touch the hearts of many to give them grace and to bless my words. Ten have joined already. Many more, among them great men, we have reason to hope, will join.” One of them he worked so patiently to get was Blessed Albert the Great.

This example of Blessed Jordan, loving St. Dominic and making him his favorite Saint, and loving the Order of St.

Dominic, working for its extension and protection, teaches us many lessons which we need not point out.

Next to the Blessed Lady, St. Dominic must be the favorite Saint of every Dominican, and every Dominican must honor St. Dominic by imitating him, loving with his whole heart and living and working and praying for the salvation of souls.



(Fifteenth Conference)

“THE ORANGE TREE OF ST. DOMINIC”

Every Dominican pilgrim going to Rome visits the venerable church and convent of Santa Sabina, to pray in the room in which St. Dominic lived and prayed, and to see the orange tree St. Dominic planted in the convent garden. That beautiful, fruitful tree is a symbol of the Order of St. Dominic. It suggests to the reflecting pilgrim many consoling thoughts. We shall mention a few of those that occurred to us as we stood before it, contemplating it and observing the Brother trim it, and generously giving us a few branches with golden oranges.

Longevity

This tree is seven centuries old. This seems a long, a very long time to a Dominican coming from America, where all things planted and cultivated by man are so very new. It seems so long in comparison with the short life of man. Even a St. Dominic lived only a little more than half a century; “man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth like a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.”

Great men like a St. Dominic live for a short time but their works live long. The orange tree he planted lives. The Order he founded lives, like the tree he planted. There the tree stands today as it has stood for seven hundred years, “like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and its leaf shall not fall off.” The Order has often, even lately, withstood storms that threatened

to break its very trunk or pull it out of the ground with its very roots. "Our Order," writes our Master General in his First Circular Letter, "is passing through not a few serious difficulties at the present period of its existence. Persecutions and the calamities of our times have been the cause of much disorder in the life of the Provinces, * * * With the help of God, we shall strive to remedy the evil. * * * If, unconquered by difficulties and sparing no sacrifices, we concentrate our attention on this great work, and, at the same time, remain faithful to the age-long traditions which bring us the spirit of our Holy Father, St. Dominic, we shall accomplish the desired restoration."

To hear the Master General speak about these destructive storms, saddens the heart of every member. It does not discourage. All resolve to do their "bit," to do their best, to accomplish the desired restoration. We feel more cheerful when we hear the Master General give us the numeric strength of the Order: "More than 5,500 Fathers and Brothers, dispersed throughout the world in the various convents and houses and on the missions are devoting themselves to the sacred ministry of the salvation of souls. More than 4,600 Nuns devoted to the contemplative life within the enclosures of their monasteries have become more than victims of expiation and intercession for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The Sisters of our Regular Third Order, more than 24,000 in number, distributed in various congregations and institutes, are accomplishing and multiplying their good works throughout the world among Catholics, Protestants and infidels, helping them by the burning zeal of their charity and ever more and more, relieving the spiritual and temporal needs of the neighbors."

The orange tree of St. Dominic, numbering so many members, producing so much fruit, is living indeed. In America, where the destructive storms of wars and per-

secutions have not raged, where all conditions are most favorable, the three branches are growing marvelously. True are the prophetic words of Isaias quoted in the Office of the feast: "My spirit that is in thee (St. Dominic), and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."

"UNITY"

The orange tree planted by St. Dominic in the garden of Santa Sabina, suggests unity for more than one reason, in more than one respect. It stands alone. It is unique. There is only one such tree planted by the great Saint.

Thus the Holy Father founded one Order and one Order only. The Fathers and Brothers, Nuns and Sisters, form one Dominican family. All are children of the same spiritual Father; all try to possess his spirit; all try to imitate his example; all try to live his life; all try to keep up his work for the salvation of souls. All have practically the same habit and rule of life; all—Fathers, Brothers, Nuns and Sisters are permitted and requested by our Master General to add the significant letters "O.P." to their religious names; all are affiliated to the one great Order of Preachers.

The orange tree suggests unity. The beautiful tree remained the same throughout these seven centuries. The tree did not change, with the changing times. Rome, the Eternal City, changed. There is an old Rome and there is a new Rome. The customs of the people and the government of the city have changed, alas, too much. The church of Santa Sabina has, at times, deteriorated and has been restored beautifully. The convent of Santa Sabina has seen the greatest saints and directors and generals of the Order come and leave. But the little orange tree in the

garden remains just the same—year after year, for seven hundred years, the same green foliage, the same sweet blossoms, the same golden fruit.

Such a unity is the beauty of the Order of Preachers. St. Dominic was a wise man who “built his house upon a rock and the rain fell, and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.”

Our Master General writes: “Well and happily is this understood by the true children of our Holy Patriarch, who do not allow their views to be perverted or changed or in any way influenced by that spirit of innovation encompassing us on all sides.” Referring to the last two General Chapters, whose representatives worked to bring the constitutions in conformity with the new code of canon law, he says: “They have adhered to the tradition of the Order with a holy pertinacity and with a religious constancy worthy of the sons of St. Dominic.” Without being irreverent, we may say, the Order of Preachers is the same “as it was in the beginning, now, and forever.”

St. Dominic’s orange tree suggests unity to the contemplating pilgrim because of the similiarity of all its leaves, of all its blossoms, of all its fruit—all are alike, because all draw their vital food from the same stem. It is the unity for which Jesus prayed after the Last Supper—“Let them be one.” It is the unity which Jesus illustrated after the Last Supper, when He said: “I am the vine, you are the branches.” It is the unity which Jesus established at the Last Supper, giving His Body and Blood to each and every one of His disciples as a food.

How the Master General pleads for this “saintly unity!” “All the followers of St. Dominic should be fully conscious of their Dominican affiliation, so that all the members and all the branches of the Order be united in one genuine brotherhood. * * * The activity of the

Fathers will be more prolific the more closely it is united to the prayer and sacrifices of the religious of the contemplative life. And that activity will also be more efficacious the more intensely the Sisters of the active life will co-operate with it."

"NOBILITY"

The orange tree is like the fruit tree that stood in the midst of paradise—"good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold." The green tree with "its golden fruit is an ornament in the garden. The fruit is sweet and wholesome and nutritious." This is the Order of St. Dominic. The popes, themselves, have declared that it is a beautiful, precious tree, bearing much good fruit. Its fruit is the salvation of immortal souls. Christ praised the Baptist and called him a "lamp burning and shining." St. Dominic was a torch, burning and shining. The love of God inflamed his pure heart and the love of neighbor made him go about to spread the light, that all, seeing the light, might praise God. He founded the Order of Preachers, to multiply such burning, shining torches, to enlighten the whole church.

The Master General expresses the nobility of the end of our Order, saying: "The Holy See, by its highest authority, approved our Order, that its children might serve God in the perfect practice of the regular life, and, at the same time, received it as an extraordinary means granted by God to the Church and as a suitable instrument for spreading the activity of the Papacy throughout the world, for conquering the errors against the Catholic faith, for restoring morals, by bringing them into conformity with evangelic holiness, and for nourishing Christian piety in souls."

The orange tree of St. Dominic occupies a prominent place. It stands in Rome, on a hill, facing the dome of

St. Peter's practically within the shadows of the Vatican. That again, symbolizes well the Order of Preachers: "The Vicar of Christ on earth delegated to St. Dominic, and to the Order founded by him, a mission proper only to bishops as successors of the apostles."

The fruit that this tree of St. Dominic, standing in a high place, always at the command of the Vicar of Christ, to do the work, by its nature so noble that it is truly episcopal, has borne during these seven centuries, we cannot enumerate and describe. The titles it merited—"Order of Preachers," "Order of Truth," "Holy Order," indicate it clearly.

Every child of St. Dominic must try to plant one such orange tree. That one orange tree that everyone must plant must be himself or herself. St. Francis de Sales wrote to his spiritual daughter, St. Chantal: "I have seen the tree planted by the Blessed St. Dominic at Rome; everyone goes to see it and prizes it for the sake of him who planted it. Having seen in you the tree of the desire of holiness, which Our Lord has planted in your heart, I hold it very dear, and take pleasure in contemplating it. * * * I entreat you to do the same, and to say with me: 'God increase you, beautiful tree, Divine, heavenly seed: May God make you bring your fruit to maturity'."



